

## State Board of Elections Changes Voting Rules Yet Again

*Decision two weeks prior to election creates confusion and makes it harder for eligible Virginians to vote*

Richmond, VA – Voting rights advocates today strongly criticized a State Board of Elections' (SBE) move to change the rules defining a valid voter ID as a decision that will confuse and make it harder for some Virginians to vote. In the absence of Vice Chair Bowers, Chairman Judd and Secretary Palmer voted to revise previously adopted regulations governing valid IDs. **The new language, introduced for the first time today, eliminates as valid for voting purposes any ID that has expired more than 12 months before Election Day.**

Previously, the date of expiration was not a factor in determining the validity of the ID. In fact, the photo voter ID being issued under direction of the SBE does not itself include an expiration date.

“The Board’s decision today makes it that much more difficult for voters to participate in our democracy,” said Tram Nguyen, co-director of Virginia New Majority. “Our elections should be free, fair, and accessible. Needlessly restricting the forms of voting ID only makes it more difficult. Approximately 300,000 Virginia voters lack a DMV-issued ID. I am particularly concerned about the four upcoming special elections on August 19th, one of which will be subject to these new requirements. This last minute decision, just 13 days before the special election will only create more voter confusion for Virginians who may need to obtain a new ID in order to exercise their constitutionally-protected rights.”

Anne Sterling, President the League of Women Voters of Virginia, also criticized the decision. “Since many forms of acceptable ID under the new photo ID law don’t have an expiration date, it makes no sense to rule out some of the most common forms of ID simply because they’re expired,” said Sterling. “Changing the rules again this close to the election means voters and election officials will face new confusion over who can vote.”

"Today's decision is extremely troubling. The Board has ignored the warning issued this week by the Attorney General's office and the hundreds of concerns voiced by the public," said Courtney Mills, Staff Attorney with the Fair Elections Legal Network. "Virginia voters deserve to be held to the same uniform standards to ensure equal access to voting. Unfortunately, this decision ensures that they will not."

This November, Virginia voters will be required to present a photo ID in order to vote, the third ID standard voters will face in three years. Voting rights advocates are focused on educating the public about the new requirement to ensure every eligible voter has what they need to vote. Acceptable forms of ID for voting include:

- A Virginia driver’s license or other photo ID issued by Virginia
- A United States passport
- Any photo ID issued by the United States government
- A student ID that has a photograph and was issued by any institution of higher learning in Virginia
- An employee identification card that has a photograph

Any voter lacking one of the above forms of ID can obtain a free voter Photo ID from any local registrar’s office. For more information on the new ID requirement and how to obtain a free ID, Virginians can visit [www.GotIDVirginia.org](http://www.GotIDVirginia.org) or call the election protection hotline at 1-866-OUR-VOTE.

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*Progress VA, Virginia New Majority, Project Vote, Fair Elections Legal Network, League of Women Voters of Virginia*

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