

Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Condemning the actions of the Pennsylvania State Senate in authorizing the passage of House Bill 934, requiring citizens to produce and display specific designated photo identification before being able to exercise their fundamental and Constitutional right to vote in state and federal elections.

Sponsors: Councilmember Bass, Councilmember Jones, Councilmember Goode, Councilmember Reynolds Brown, Councilmember Tasco, Councilmember Greenlee, Councilmember Henon, Councilmember Blackwell, Councilmember Quiñones Sánchez, Councilmember Johnson, Councilmember Squilla

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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result	Tally
3/15/2012	0	CITY COUNCIL	READ	Pass	14:2
3/15/2012	0	CITY COUNCIL	ADOPTED	Pass	14:2
3/8/2012	0	CITY COUNCIL	Introduced and Ordered Placed On Next Week's Final Passage Calendar	Pass	

Condemning the actions of the Pennsylvania State Senate in authorizing the passage of House Bill 934, requiring citizens to produce and display specific designated photo identification before being able to exercise their fundamental and Constitutional right to vote in state and federal elections.

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Senate, passed Bill 934 on March 7, 2012, which creates an unnecessary hurdle, preventing citizens from engaging in one of the most sacred and fundamental rights---the ability to vote freely in municipal, state-wide and federal elections; and

WHEREAS, National studies show that as many as 11% of eligible voters, more than 21 million individuals, do not have government-issued photo identification. This percentage is even higher for seniors, people with disabilities, low-income voters, and students. Certain groups, primarily poor, elderly, and minority citizens, are less likely to possess these forms of identification than the general population.; and

WHEREAS, Minority citizens are less likely to possess government-issued photo identification. According to a recent national survey sponsored by the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law, 25% of African-American voting-aged citizens have no current government-issued photo identification. Using 2010 census figures, this amounts to 5.5 million adult African-American citizens without photo identification. Additionally, sixteen percent of Latino voting-age citizens have no current government issued photo identification; and

WHEREAS, The recent wave of voter restrictions has demonstrated that the fundamental right to vote is still subject to partisan manipulation. Proponents of this law have argued for photo identification mandates by claiming that widespread voter fraud exists in the United States, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 934 creates new requirements for both the state and local governments by mandating that the Commonwealth disseminate information to the public about photo identification requirements to vote and provide free identification to individuals who cannot otherwise obtain or afford identification A survey of state implementation reports and estimates from legislative fiscal notes provides an indication of the likely cost to Pennsylvania of a state voter identification program. In order to meet the requirements set forth in the legislation and avoid potential litigation, Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center estimates first-year costs for a voter identification program of approximately \$11 million.; and

WHEREAS, Voter identification requirements for voting have been challenged and opposed by the NAACP, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, The United States Justice Department, National Council of La Raza, the American Civil Liberties Union, AARP, Women’s Law Project, Common Cause Pennsylvania, and the AFL-CIO; now therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby condemn the actions of the Pennsylvania State Senate in authorizing the passage of House Bill 934, requiring citizens to display specifically designated photo identification before being able to exercise their fundamental and Constitutional right to vote in state and federal elections which will most certainly lead to the disenfranchisement of millions of Pennsylvania voters.