



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Urging the Pennsylvania General Assembly to reject House Bill 934, which imposes unnecessary and restrictive voter ID requirements that would disproportionately impact African-American and Latino voters, senior citizens, people with disabilities, the homeless, low-income citizens, and young voters, and thereby disenfranchise law-abiding citizens from exercising their right to vote.

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania state House Bill 934, passed by the state House of Representatives on June 28, 2011, proposes to remove existing protections against voter fraud and instead mandate all voters present government photo identification every time they go to the polls; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 934 is currently being considered by the Pennsylvania state Senate in its Committee on State Government; and

WHEREAS, National studies show that as many as 11% of all legal voters do not have a current government photo ID; and

WHEREAS, Evidence suggests that senior citizens would face even greater impact, with up to 18%, or 340,000 people, unable to meet the proposed requirements; and

WHEREAS, African-American and Latino voters, senior citizens, people with disabilities, the homeless, low-income citizens, and young voters are among those least likely to possess driver's licenses, and thus would also be significantly burdened; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that adoption of House Bill 934 could cost Pennsylvania taxpayers \$11.5 million in just the first year, and a total of \$18 to \$25 million over three years, based on the actual experience in other states. These costs relate to mandatory services like issuing free identification for people who lack it, training and administrative costs for election administrators and polls workers, and providing voters with warnings about the new state mandate; and

WHEREAS, Preventing voter fraud is a laudable goal but the right to vote is the hallmark of our democracy and should not be made more cumbersome or difficult than absolutely necessary; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 934 represents a misguided approach that will not meaningfully affect the limited problem of voter fraud. Numerous studies have found that the rare examples of voter impersonation are almost never the kind that could be prevented by a photo identification law, that voter ID requirements merely address one exceedingly rare form of voter fraud: impersonation of another registered voter at the polls; and

WHEREAS, A diverse coalition of stakeholders opposes adoption of photo identification requirements for voting, including the NAACP, National Council of La Raza, the ACLU, and additional civil and human rights organizations, unions, nonprofit legal services agencies, and associations representing minorities and retirees; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby urge

Pennsylvania General Assembly to reject House Bill 934, which would impose unnecessary and restrictive voter ID requirements that disproportionately impact African-American and Latino voters, senior citizens, people with disabilities, the homeless, low-income citizens, and young voters, and thereby disenfranchise law-abiding citizens from exercising their right to vote.