

# The Impacts of Photo Identification Requirements on Voting (Condensed)

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America First Policy Institute

Full study found ([here](#)).

## Purpose and Context

The report examines the effects of photo ID requirements on voter turnout and election integrity, addressing claims that such laws disenfranchise voters. It analyzes both international and U.S. data and provides policy recommendations.

## Public Support

- 81% of Americans favor photo ID requirements for voting, including strong support across racial and income groups (Rasmussen, 2022).
- Support remains consistent across education levels and political affiliations, undermining claims that these laws disproportionately harm minorities.

## International Evidence

- 33 of 37 OECD countries require photo ID to vote, including nations with diverse political systems.
- Countries with photo ID laws report high voter turnout, with a median of 66.2%, compared to the U.S. median of 46.6% in the 2022 midterms.
- Example: Mexico introduced biometric ID cards, and turnout increased from 47.7% (2015) to 52.6% (2021).

## Domestic Evidence

- Over half of U.S. states require photo ID.
- Supreme Court upheld voter ID laws in 2008, citing states' interest in election integrity.
- Studies show no significant negative impact on turnout:
  - Mycoff et al. (2009): Socio-demographic factors, not ID laws, drive turnout.
  - Cantoni & Pons (2021): No effect on participation by race, gender, or party.
- Georgia case study: After photo ID laws were enacted, turnout rose from 55.9% (2018) to 56.9% (2022), with record-breaking early and absentee voting.

## Impact on Election Confidence

- Research indicates photo ID laws increase public trust in elections and reduce perceptions of fraud (Endres & Panagopoulos, 2021).
- Public education on ID requirements can boost turnout (Citrin & Green, 2014).

## Policy Recommendations

1. Require government-issued photo ID for all voters, including expiration date, photo, name, and address.
2. Provide free voter photo ID cards and advertise availability to remove barriers.

## **Conclusion**

The report concludes that photo ID laws:

- Do not suppress voter turnout or disenfranchise minorities.
- Are widely supported by Americans and common internationally.
- Enhance election integrity and public confidence.

# Voter ID Constitutional Amendment

Jan 2023

Commonwealth Foundation

Full link found ([here](#))

## Key Points

- Voter ID requirements improve election integrity, while voter turnout increases, without impacting election outcomes.
- Pennsylvania voters support Voter ID requirements by a wide margin, with support across all regions and demographic groups.
- Voter ID requirements are common throughout the country. Thirty-five states require an ID to vote; Pennsylvania is among the 15 states that do not.

## Background

- Currently, Pennsylvania does [not](#) require identification to vote in person, unless it is the voter's first time voting in an election district.<sup>[1]</sup>
  - Individuals voting absentee or via mail-in-ballot must provide a "valid and current" driver's license number or PennDOT ID. For voters without these, the state requires the last four digits of their Social Security number. And "only if" none of these are available, does Pennsylvania accept limited types of valid proof of identification.<sup>[2]</sup>
- In 2012, the state enacted a voter ID law that was later [struck](#) down as unconstitutional due to issues with implementing the law.<sup>[3]</sup> Specifically, the law made it difficult for low-income individuals to obtain the necessary identification.
  - Since then, voter trust in elections has dropped significantly. A 2022 [Gallup](#) poll found that only 63 percent of voters nationwide were "very or somewhat confident" ahead of the 2022 midterms that votes would be accurately cast and counted. This is a 12-point drop in confidence compared to the 2006 midterms.<sup>[4]</sup>
- [House Bill 1300](#) was an election reform bill passed by the legislature in 2021,<sup>[5]</sup> that provided for voter identification requirements. However, Gov. Tom Wolf [vetoed](#) HB 1300, citing the bill's voter ID requirements as a reason for his veto.<sup>[6]</sup>
- Less than a month later, Wolf indicated that despite his veto, he was [not](#) completely opposed to voter ID requirements.<sup>[7]</sup>

## The Constitutional Amendment

- Senate Bill 1 [includes](#) a proposed constitutional amendment that would require voters to "present a valid identification before receiving a ballot to vote in person."<sup>[8]</sup> Furthermore, this proposed legislation requires voters not voting in person to "provide proof of a valid identification with his or her ballot."
  - The amendment would allow for multiple forms of ID, not just photo ID.
  - The proposed amendment also provides **free government-issued IDs** to those without one, stating, "if a qualified elector does not possess a valid identification,

he or she shall, upon request and confirmation of identity, be furnished with a government-issued Identification at no cost to the qualified elector.”

- Providing free identification addresses the implementation problems that the 2012 law faced.
- A voter ID constitutional amendment was introduced in May of 2021 as [SB 735](#).<sup>[9]</sup> In June of 2021, this legislation passed the Senate with a bipartisan [vote](#).<sup>[10]</sup>
  - Following this, the House amended SB 106 in December 2021, with bipartisan support, to include the voter ID constitutional amendment from SB 735. In July 2022, [SB 106](#) received bipartisan approval in both the [House](#) and [Senate](#).<sup>[11], [12]</sup>
- If the House and Senate approve the amendment, now part of SB 1, during the 2023–24 legislative session, the voter ID constitutional amendment could be on the ballot as early as the 2023 primary election.
  - Constitutional amendments must pass in two consecutive legislative sessions to go on the ballot.
  - On January 9, 2023, SB 1 advanced out of the Senate State Government Committee with [bipartisan](#) support, and passed the Senate, again with bipartisan support, on January 11.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Voter ID and Turnout

- A study from the National Bureau of Economic Research found that voter ID [does not reduce turnout](#), nor does it have an impact on election outcomes.<sup>[14]</sup>
- A [2015 study](#) determined that 93 percent of all voters already have a valid form of photo ID.<sup>[15]</sup>
- Despite roughly two-thirds of the states being subject to a voter identification law, voter turnout in 2018 saw an historic surge. [Pew Research Center](#) analysts saw “historic jumps” among every racial group.<sup>[16]</sup> Black turnout rose nearly 27 percent, outpacing the turnout increase among White voters. Hispanic and Asian voter turnout increased by 50 percent.
- In 2021, Georgia enacted Senate Bill 202, an election reform law that required proof of identity when absentee voting. President Biden [decried](#) the law as “Jim Crow.”<sup>[17]</sup> Despite this, the state saw [record-breaking](#) turnout in the 2022 midterms.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Support for Voter ID

- Voter ID receives wide-ranging support nationally. A July 2021 poll from the Honest Elections Project shows that [81 percent of voters](#), support requiring identification to vote.<sup>[19]</sup>
- High levels of support are also seen in [Pennsylvania polling](#): A June 2021 poll from Franklin and Marshall College found that 74 percent of respondents, including 77 percent of Independents, favored photo identification requirements.<sup>[20]</sup>
- October 2022 [polling](#) from the Commonwealth Foundation revealed high levels of support for the proposed constitutional amendment in Pennsylvania, with 70 percent of respondents supporting the measure:
  - By voter registration, 91 percent of Republicans, 50 percent of Democrats, and 70 percent of independents support the amendment.

- Support in Philadelphia was 57 percent, and 64 percent in the Philadelphia suburbs. Support was greater than 67 percent everywhere else in Pennsylvania.
- By race, the amendment polled at 58 percent with African Americans and 66 percent with Hispanics.

#### Other States

- Thirty-five [states require](#) an ID to vote, with 18 requiring a photo ID and 17 allowing for certain non-photo IDs.<sup>[21]</sup>
- In November 2018, voters in two states, [Arkansas](#) and [North Carolina](#), approved ballot measures to amend their state constitutions to require photo voter identification.<sup>[22], [23]</sup>
- In 2022, voters in [Nebraska](#) approved a voter ID ballot initiative by a two to one margin.<sup>[24]</sup>

#### Conclusion

Pennsylvania is among the minority of states that do not require proof of identification to vote in person. Such requirements are popular with voters and have no negative effects on turnout, or election outcomes. At a time where confidence in elections is dropping, Voter ID requirements protect the integrity of all votes and serve to rebuild trust in Pennsylvania's election process.

## Stricter Pa. voter ID rules wouldn't have stopped most recent ballot fraud cases, analysis finds

Aug 19 2025  
Carter Walker  
Votebeat

Stricter voter ID requirements would likely not have prevented people from casting fraudulent ballots in the vast majority of cases charged in Pennsylvania over the past decade, a Votebeat and Spotlight PA analysis shows.

Over the 10 years, the organizations found 14 instances in which law enforcement or election officials say at least one fraudulent ballot was cast.

The analysis is based on Pennsylvania court system data on election crimes charged between July 2015 and July 2025, and additional reports identified by the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank. The organizations then cross-checked this data with news reports and charging documents to determine whether any fraudulent ballots were cast.

All told, law enforcement or election officials say 149 fraudulent ballots were submitted over the 10 years.

The analysis did not include cases charged under statutes other than the Election Code or excluded from public court records due to expungements or other determinations. It's also possible that not every instance of ballot fraud is identified by law enforcement. But the findings are in line with previous research on the topic, suggesting that incidences of such fraud are exceedingly rare.

And of the instances identified, according to the analysis, just two could have been potentially prevented by the stricter voter ID rules proposed in Pennsylvania's [House Bill 771](#), which is under consideration in the legislature.

That's two out of roughly 61 million ballots cast, a rate that's less than half the odds of winning a \$1 million prize in the Powerball lottery.

"This is exactly what those of us who studied the issue have known all along," said Joshua Douglas, a law professor at the University of Kentucky who [helped craft](#) that state's 2020 voter ID legislation. "Strict voter ID requirements are a solution in search of a problem, because to rig an election or change an election result through this kind of voter fraud, you would need a whole lot of people involved to make a difference, because you don't know how many votes you need to steal."

But the amount of fraud that expanded voter ID could prevent is not the only consideration. State Rep. Tom Mehaffie (R., Dauphin), prime sponsor of HB 771, said Votebeat and Spotlight PA's findings don't change his view on the need for a voter ID requirement. "That's not why we did this bill," he said. "We did this bill for voter confidence."

### **How do fraudulent votes get cast?**

Under Mehaffie's bill, voters would have to show any one of 20 different types of documents — such as a driver's license, student ID, or utility bill — every time they vote. If they cannot show it, they could still cast a regular ballot after signing an affidavit affirming their identity. The affidavit option, which other states currently offer, helps ease concerns among critics of voter ID laws that they could unfairly disenfranchise voters who don't have easy access to ID.

Currently, voters in Pennsylvania are required to show an ID when they vote at a new polling place for the first time.

Supporters of voter ID laws often tout them as a commonsense election security measure, but it's not clear that they play a significant role in preventing fraudulent votes.

Most of the 149 fraudulent ballots Votebeat and Spotlight PA's analysis found were cast with the assistance of a poll worker. Roughly two-thirds of them came from a scheme in which former U.S. Rep. Michael "Ozzie" Myers — who had served prison time for his role in the 1970s [ABSCAM](#) bribery scandal — [paid Philadelphia poll workers to add votes](#) for candidates he supported in several elections from 2014 to 2018.

Many of the remaining fraudulent votes were mail ballots applied for and cast by someone who had access to a Pennsylvania voter's personal information, according to law enforcement, as was the case in a [2021 mayoral election in Millbourne](#). This included information that would be on the documents required under voter ID laws.

One instance that may have been prevented by the voter ID legislation currently in the state House came in 2020, when a man who had already voted returned to a polling place in Chester County to [cast a vote on behalf of his son](#). Another was a [2016 ballot cast in Westmoreland County](#) by a man who lived in Allegheny County.

Christopher Spackman, elections director for Dauphin County, said election administrators have mechanisms in place to detect attempts to vote fraudulently. For instance, if a voter is mailed a ballot and then dies, the death is noted in the state's voter management system. If the ballot is completed and returned, election officials know not to count it and to refer it to investigators.

"There's really not many options for voter fraud to occur as it is," he said, adding that what paths there are are generally going to be discovered "on the back end."

## **Voter ID requirement is widely popular**

Even with the existing safeguards, requiring voters to show some form of ID every time they vote remains a widely popular election policy. A [2024 study from the Pew Research Center](#) found that 81% of Americans favor requiring photo ID to vote, and [a poll from Franklin & Marshall College](#), also from 2024, found 73% support among Pennsylvanians. Douglas, who helped write Kentucky's voter ID law, said the idea has achieved such high levels of support not only because it has become a rallying cry for those who support theories of stolen elections, but also because it seems like such a simple requirement.

"I think for most people it sounds like common sense," he said. "Of course I have an ID in my pocket. Why wouldn't I bring it?"

He noted that in other countries, people often find it odd that the U.S. does not have a nationwide ID requirement for voting. But the U.S. doesn't provide citizens with a national ID card, as many other countries do, and it lets states set most voting policies.

Mehaffie, the bill sponsor, told Votebeat and Spotlight PA recently that he frequently hears from voters concerned about election security, and he sees the legislation as a way to address those concerns without disenfranchising anyone or creating too big a burden on voters.

He said he and his co-sponsors crafted the bill with potential court challenges in mind, so that it could avoid the fate of Pennsylvania's strict 2012 photo ID law, which was challenged in court and struck down as unconstitutional.

## **Opposition to voter ID requirement is softening**

The American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania, which brought that challenge, has said [it is neutral on Mehaffie's bill](#).

And Democrats in Harrisburg have been less resistant in recent years to expanding voter ID requirements. Gov. Josh Shapiro has said he is open to expanded voter ID rules, so long as they don't disenfranchise voters, and earlier this year, state House Speaker Joanna McCClinton (D., Philadelphia), a longtime opponent of voter ID requirements, [made similar comments](#).

Manuel Bonder, a spokesperson for Shapiro, directed a reporter to the governor's previous comments when asked if he would support the version of voter ID proposed in House Bill 771.

Not all Democrats are on board, though. At a May hearing of the state House State Government Committee, Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta (D., Philadelphia) [dismissed the bill as unnecessary](#).

The bill still passed out of the committee with Democratic support, but it's currently [stalled in the full state House](#). Mehaffie said he hears from his Republican colleagues that the bill isn't strict enough, and from Democrats that it is unnecessary. Meanwhile, Republican leaders in the state Senate have insisted that a voter ID requirement be passed through a constitutional amendment, so it wouldn't be as vulnerable to court challenges on constitutional grounds.

[With the state budget stalled](#) and public transit funding dominating attention in the state Capitol, Mehaffie said his bill isn't currently part of negotiations. Still, he urged lawmakers on both sides to take a pragmatic approach to finding the best possible compromise. "To my colleagues in the Republican caucus, I would say, you know, this is the best you're gonna get," he said. "To my Democratic colleagues, I would say, you know, look at the polls, look where things are at. ... It is a bipartisan issue."

# Pennsylvania Organizations Committed to Voting Rights Oppose Voter ID

Mar 21 2025

Common Cause PA et. Al

The undersigned organizations are voting rights advocates united by our desire for secure and accessible elections. We support common-sense measures to improve election security while protecting each eligible voter's right to cast a ballot. However, recent efforts to impose additional paperwork requirements on Pennsylvania voters through voter ID threaten to make Pennsylvania's elections less accessible and have the potential to disenfranchise voters if implemented without proper safeguards.

This proposal comes at a time when Pennsylvania voters—and election officials—are burdened by inconsistent and confusing election rules which complicate voting in the Commonwealth and must be urgently addressed. **We write to urge you to oppose HB 771.**

## Concerns About HB 771

In the 2024 general election, we witnessed significant difficulties with election administration that inconvenienced and potentially disenfranchised thousands of Pennsylvania voters, including:

- **Long lines at polling places:** Many voters, particularly on college campuses, waited in long lines because of widespread problems with voter registrations. At some locations, the wait exceeded two hours, including a polling place at Lehigh University, where students waited up to six hours to vote. Added administrative burdens under this bill would make those lines even longer.
- **Insufficient early voting rules:** In the absence of true early voting, counties that wanted to provide more on-demand mail ballots used satellite elections offices, yet struggled to handle voter turnout. Long lines at the Doylestown SEO led to confusion and controversy and resulted in a court order to meet the demand.
- **Inconsistent mail voting rules:** Pennsylvania courts have been flooded with election litigation due to unclear and inconsistent rules that disenfranchised thousands of voters for minor errors and caused confusion and extra work for counties. If passed, HB 771 will contribute to longer lines and voter confusion and has the potential to disenfranchise many Pennsylvania voters unless reforms such as true early voting and same-day voter registration are implemented.

Absent these reforms, HB 771 will impose additional burdens on already under-resourced elections offices. New voter paperwork requirements will result in longer lines, including at student voting locations across the Commonwealth, and may deter voters who believe

they lack appropriate paperwork from voting. Without substantial resources for voter education and election worker training, this legislation risks disenfranchising voters.

### **Impact on Voters**

Experience has shown that making it harder to vote disenfranchises voters of color, older voters, and voters with disabilities. In two states with recently implemented voter ID laws, Black and Latino voters were disproportionately more likely to lack the proper ID to vote. A 2022 study found election administration policies had a direct and disparate effect on turnout among voters with disabilities.

### **Lack of Evidence for Voter Impersonation**

Voter identification laws do not address an actual problem. In-person voter impersonation is exceedingly rare; multiple investigations found evidence to be “strikingly sparse,” with fewer than 0.000002% of ballots cast even alleging impersonation. Over 42 years, only three instances resulted in a criminal conviction. Current rules for first-time voters already address this issue.

### **Conclusion**

Voter identification laws create additional obstacles between voters and the ballot box and increase administrative burdens without solving a real problem. The General Assembly should focus on making voting easier through early voting, same-day registration, and increased funding for elections—not harder by imposing unnecessary ID requirements.

### **Organizations Signed**

Common Cause Pennsylvania  
All Voting is Local Action  
League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania  
New Pennsylvania Project  
Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance  
Planned Parenthood Pennsylvania Advocates  
PA Stands Up  
Black Political Empowerment Project  
Make the Road PA  
NextGen America  
SEIU PA State Council  
Council on American-Islamic Relations – Philadelphia  
POWER Interfaith  
Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
Pennsylvania Policy Center  
...and others.

## 24 things that require a photo ID

*Aug 2013  
Ashe Schow  
Washington Examiner*

Voter-ID laws continue to get a lot of attention, and proponents of the law are being drowned out by opponents claiming the laws discriminate against certain voters.

Rather than getting IDs to the people who are supposedly disenfranchised, opponents spend their efforts trying to end the laws, even though polls consistently show overwhelming majorities of voters approve of the laws.

Below are just some of the examples of things you need to prove your identity for:

1. Alcohol
2. Cigarettes
3. Opening A Bank Account
4. Apply for Food Stamps
5. Apply for Welfare
6. Apply for Medicaid/Social Security
7. Apply for Unemployment or a Job
8. Rent/Buy a house, apply for a mortgage
9. Drive/Buy/Rent A Car
10. Get on an Airplane
11. Get Married
12. Purchase a Gun
13. Adopt a Pet
14. Rent a Hotel Room
15. Apply for a Hunting License
16. Apply for a Fishing License
17. Buy a Cell Phone
18. Visit a Casino
19. Pick Up a Prescription
20. Hold a Rally or Protest
21. Blood Donations
22. Buy an "M" rated video game
23. Purchase Nail Polish at CVS
24. Purchase Certain Cold Medicines