



### Larry's Column

Last month, the Michigan Supreme Court voted to revive a law requiring that voters show photo ID to vote – and created a big headache for election administrators.

On the face of it, the concept seems sensible. You need identification for many transactions, so why not voting? What's the problem with this law?

First of all, there's no evidence that crooks are showing up at the polls pretending to be other people. It's a felony, which is a pretty strong disincentive for most people. But, perhaps more to the point, it is an ineffective way to steal elections. Not knowing the vote totals in advance, the crooks would need to create thousands of fake votes – maybe ten thousand or more in a large election. For each fake vote, one of the fraudsters would have to stand in line and impersonate a different voter. With or without IDs, they could never get away with it.

Second, voting is fundamental and should be accessible to all citizens – even those who don't have or habitually carry identification with them.

Third, implementation of this law will add more steps to the voting process. That will raise the cost – we'll need more workers, more training, more forms to print and store – and lengthen the wait in line.

The law provides that people who don't have any ID can swear an affidavit to that effect. Though the law does not provide an affidavit option for those who forgot to bring an ID to the polls, the state is going to interpret the law as if it did.

On the other hand, if you choose to vote absentee, there is no need for any photo ID whatsoever. Until the Saturday before the election, you can typically go to your local clerk's office and cast your absentee ballot on the spot. Or, if you plan ahead, you can vote by mail.

Our neighbors in Ohio had to implement a similar voter-ID law in the last general election. Thanks to preparation, planning, training, and a public information campaign, they had few problems on Election Day.

Michigan can do that, too. And we will

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### Dates To Remember...

#### August

28 - Ballot wording of local proposals due

#### September

- 11 - Village Election Day
- 20 - AV ballots available for November election
- 29 - Last day to publish close of registration



### State Q&A on Voter IDs

**More info coming soon!**

**Q: When will the law be implemented?**

A: It will be implemented starting with the November 6, 2007 election. Clerks will be provided the necessary materials and training ahead of time by the State Bureau of Elections.

**Q: Who will need to show picture ID?**

A: Every voter appearing at the polls on election day must present ID. Those who do not have a picture ID or are not currently in possession of it may instead sign an affidavit. The affidavit will be made available to local clerks as well as to commercial vendors for printing. Absentee voters do NOT have to present photo ID.

**Q: What pieces of ID will satisfy the photo ID requirement?**

A: 1.) Driver's license or photo ID card issued by Michigan, another state, or the federal government; 2.) U.S. passport; 3.) Military ID with photo; 4.) Current student ID with photo, from a high school or accredited institution of higher education; 5.) Tribal ID card with photo.