

Tuesday, July 31, 2007

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Photo ID will reduce turnout

Registered voters suffered a loss when the Michigan Supreme Court approved a photo ID voting limit.

Under this partisan rule, if you don't show a photo ID in the next election you may not get to vote for president.

If you must show photo ID to get on a plane, drive a car or rent a movie, what's the big deal? Those are not constitutional rights. Voting is. This hurts the poor and elderly. AARP said the decision is regretful since many elderly don't have a photo ID.

You need not show a photo ID to have the right to remain silent in a criminal case or a right to an attorney in court, to exercise the right to free speech or freedom of religion, or to be protected from the unlawful seizure of property. The right to vote is even more important and should have fewer restrictions.

Former Attorney General Frank Kelly found the photo ID law unconstitutional.

The law already lets election challengers ask for a photo ID if there is reason to believe a voter is not qualified. The attorney general and secretary of state prosecuted no cases of voter fraud.

Clerks should not need a photo ID to tell if a person is dead or a voter is impersonating the president. Even Iraqi citizens don't need a photo ID to vote. Why should we have less freedom?

Republican leaders know a photo ID will slow voting lines and reduce voter turnout, affecting 350,000 Michigan voters. Putting restrictions on voting, such as an ID card, a citizenship test, requiring property ownership and even a poll tax have traditionally been used to prevent decent citizens from voting. This is the latest effort. Look for the GOP to try to get court limits on absent voting next, where its case is already pending in Macomb County.

The silver lining in the ruling is now there's reason Michigan should immediately enact Election Day voter registration. We no longer need a 30-day waiting period after you register to vote. Since voters now must show a photo ID, we should let anyone who wants to register do so even on Election Day. Michigan would then join Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, Wisconsin and Wyoming, which already allow Election Day voter registration.

CARMELLA SABAUGH
Macomb County
clerk/register of deeds