

HCS HJR 48 -- VOTER IDENTIFICATION

SPONSOR: Nolte (Cox)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on Immigration by a vote of 8 to 2.

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment authorizes the General Assembly to require any person seeking to vote in a public election to provide election officials a form of identification that may be prescribed by law, including a government-issued photo identification, in order to show that he or she is a United States citizen lawfully residing in this state. The State of Missouri will provide at no cost at least one form of the identification required to vote to any otherwise qualified citizen without proper identification who desires to vote.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2009, FY 2010, and FY 2011.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill will prevent voter fraud, and it is not necessary that fraud occur first before the state takes measures to prevent it. The integrity of the electoral process is very important.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Cox; Harvey Tettlebaum; Missouri Eagle Forum; Missourians Against Illegal Immigration; and David Keller.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that Missouri's current voter laws are among the strictest in the nation and work well. There is no evidence of voter fraud. Barriers to voting should be allowed only for compelling reasons, and potentially preventing unproven voter fraud is not such a reason. Voting is a fundamental right. Democracy works best when the most citizens can participate. Preventing legitimate American citizens from voting in effort to stop the extreme few who may commit fraud is too high a cost to pay.

Testifying against the bill were Office of the Secretary of State; Service Employees International Union, Missouri/Kansas State Council; American Civil Liberties Union of Eastern Missouri; and The Whole Person Incorporated.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the committee needs to be aware that there is a difference between a wall and a filter, and this measure is a filter. The committee should also consider the unintended consequences of passing this resolution.

Testifying on the bill was Paraquad, Incorporated.