

The Wisconsin Patriot Coalition

Responses to Common Objections Raised against Photo ID Voting Reform

1. **Objection:** *There have been few convictions for voter fraud in Wisconsin. Voter ID is a “solution in search of a problem.”*

Response: A small number of convictions for voter fraud does not mean that those convictions represent all fraudulent votes cast. Many types of voter fraud are simply difficult to detect and/or prove in a court of law. In fact, a report on the November 2004 election published by the Special Investigations Unit of the [Milwaukee Police Department](#) found numerous indications of fraud, including “more votes cast than voters recorded.”

Moreover, limited resources exist for investigating the numerous fraud reports that are lodged after any election. In many cases, this fact increases the difficulty of verifying credible reports of fraud, including people crossing state lines to vote. It also slows the process of prosecuting such crime where such action is possible. A photo ID requirement, while excluding no eligible Wisconsin voter, will help to ensure free, fair, and honest elections by reducing the opportunity for at least some types of voter fraud.

2. **Objection:** *Voters cannot access Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offices to acquire an ID.*

Response: This objection seems to assume that all individuals without proper voting ID would need to present themselves at the DMV just prior to voting. In fact, this assumption would only hold true if SB 6 were implemented shortly before the 2011 spring elections. Should such an event occur, legislators are working to ensure that no legitimate voter would be excluded from the voting process.

In general, however, voters could present themselves at a DMV facility at any time during the year to obtain proper ID. DMV offices are located throughout the state and travel teams go to all but a [few counties](#). Once acquired, a state-issued ID is valid for eight years, just like a driver’s license. Absentee balloting is another option if a trip to a DMV office once every eight years is not possible. SB 6 also provides for individuals in long-term care facilities, such as the elderly, to vote without a photo ID.

3. **Objection:** *Over 10 percent of the population does not have the type of ID required by SB 6 and will therefore not be able to vote.*

Response: Reputable sources don’t put the percentage anywhere near this high. In Wisconsin, most potential voters without a photo ID reside in long-term care facilities. Those living in such facilities will be covered by an exemption in SB 6 that provides for alternate ID verification.

A driver’s license or photo ID has become a necessity for everyday life. In fact, one can now do little without a photo ID—besides vote, that is. It must be presumed that the vast majority of legal residents possess a photo ID simply to conduct routine business. If they do not presently have a form of ID stipulated by SB 6, the free ID provision in SB 6 renders this objection essentially moot. Furthermore, legislators are working to ensure that should SB 6 be implemented just prior to 2011 spring elections, proper allowances would be made. See the response to Objection 2.

Recent rulings in Indiana would also seem to address this objection. In 2005, Indiana passed a photo ID law that became effective July 1, 2006. In 2010, nearly four years after the law’s

implementation, the Indiana Supreme Court stated in an opinion upholding it that the plaintiffs had [failed to identify a single individual prevented from voting by the law](#). Wisconsin legislators are making a concerted effort to use the Indiana legislation as a model so that our own voting reforms would withstand challenges of this nature.

4. **Objection:** *The elderly and persons with disabilities will be disenfranchised.*

Response: Absentee balloting is and will continue to be a convenient option for those unable to get to the polls. Again, individuals confined to long-term care facilities, such as nursing homes, will be covered by an exception in SB 6. See the response to Objection 2.

5. **Objection:** *African-Americans, Latinos and new American citizens are far less likely to have the forms of ID that SB 6 would require.*

Response: This objection falsely attempts to paint minorities, in particular, as disenfranchised by a photo ID requirement. In fact, the lines of disenfranchisement should not be drawn along either economic or racial lines. The real issue at stake is the disenfranchisement of legitimate voters by illegitimate ones.

As noted in the response to Objection 3, a photo ID has become a basic necessity of everyday life. There is little the average citizen can now do without one. If such ID has not yet been obtained by a legitimate citizen/voter, then opportunity will exist for them to obtain such ID at no expense as covered in the response to Objection 2.

6. **Objection:** *Voter ID laws costs too much to implement.*

Response: One thing is certain: Doing nothing to ensure the integrity of Wisconsin's elections is free. That is, until one considers cost from other angles. What about the cost of undermined public confidence in elections that always ensues when great risk of fraud exists? What about the potential fiscal and/or social costs of legislation that might be enacted by elected officials who illegitimately win election to public office and proceed to violate the will of the people?

Safeguarding elections is a form of insurance policy. An insurance policy doesn't eliminate cost; rather, it takes certain risks into consideration and shields the policyholder from potentially higher costs that would be far more difficult to cover. It is wiser to spend the money on implementing photo ID now than it is to risk having to pay far greater costs later.

Most of the expense for implementing photo ID in Wisconsin would center on a onetime cost for issuing free IDs to a small percentage of citizens who do not already have them. Normally, these DMV-issued IDs would cost an individual \$28. At this cost, producing a DMV-issued ID for a small segment of the population would certainly remain far less expensive than producing and issuing to all legal residents of voting age an additional, separate form of photo ID, useful solely for voting.

7. **Objection:** *Just after a presidential election in which we saw historic turnout among young people, African-Americans and Latinos, some legislators want to reverse those advances.*

Response: No evidence logically supports this concern. Legislators sponsoring SB 6 and those who support such reform simply believe in ensuring free, fair, and honest elections in which each legitimate voter gets one vote—no more, no less. Safeguarding such principles does not take anything away from anyone. Rather, adopting photo ID will help to ensure that the express will inherent in each voter's ballot—regardless of the color, race, or creed of the voter—maintains its proper weight in an election.

8. **Objection:** *Voter ID requirements will add substantial new burdens on election administrators and poll workers.*

Response: Polls workers should already be asking a voter for their name and address. In fact, at a hearing on photo ID held by the Senate Committee on Transportation and Elections on January 26th, witnesses having experience working as poll workers or in conjunction with a county clerk's office noted that photo ID would speed registration and confirmation processes. The greater issue is giving county clerks the time and tools necessary to implement changes and properly train poll workers.

9. **Objection:** *Voter ID laws exacerbate low voter turnout.*

Response: States with a photo ID requirement have demonstrated no reduction in voter turnout. To the contrary, according to [at least two studies](#), photo ID requirements may increase voting participation.