

HB 1073 -- VOTER IDENTIFICATION

SPONSOR: Dugger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Committee on Elections by a vote of 8 to 4.

This bill requires a person to submit a specified form of photo identification in order to vote in a public election. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Specifies that a person seeking to vote in a public election must establish his or her identity and eligibility to vote as a United States citizen lawfully residing in this state by presenting to election officials one of the specified forms of personal identification that contains his or her photograph. All costs incurred by an election authority to implement the photo identification requirement must be reimbursed by the state. If there is no state appropriation and distribution of state funds, the election authority must not enforce the photo identification requirement;

(2) Allows an individual to vote by casting a provisional ballot after signing an affidavit if he or she does not possess a required form of personal identification because of a physical or mental disability or handicap, the inability to pay for a birth certificate or other supporting documentation necessary to obtain the identification required to vote, or a sincere religious belief against these forms of personal identification or the person was born on or before January 1, 1949;

(3) Allows an individual to vote by casting a provisional ballot if he or she lacks photographic identification and then return to the election authority within three days after the election with a valid form of identification so that the provisional ballot may be counted;

(4) Requires the state and all fee offices to provide at no cost at least one form of personal identification required to vote to a qualified individual who does not already possess the required identification and desires the identification in order to vote; and

(5) Removes the provision allowing a disabled or elderly person to obtain a nondriver's license photo identification through a mobile processing system operated by the Department of Revenue.

The bill will become effective only upon voter approval of a constitutional amendment that authorizes the General Assembly to enact laws regarding photo identification requirements for

elections.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill requires photographic identification for all voters in public elections which is the only reliable way to prevent voter impersonation fraud. It allows numerous exceptions and requires the state to pay for the identification necessary for a person who doesn't have a photo identification to vote.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Dugger; Philip Todd; and Mitch Hubbard.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that it will disenfranchise voters. It has very narrow criteria for acceptable forms of identification which makes it one of the strictest proposed laws in the nation. The use of provisional ballots is unacceptable because signature matching is an unreliable art and many voters are unable to sign their names legibly for a variety of reasons. There is no documented pattern of voter impersonation fraud in Missouri and there is no good reason to modify the Missouri Constitution or state laws to solve a nonexistent problem.

Testifying against the bill were the Office of the Secretary of State; Missouri National Education Association; American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri; Adolphus Pruitt, Missouri NAACP; League of Women Voters; Missouri Association for Social Welfare; Denise Lieberman; Burt Newman; and Wayne Lee.