

HCS HJR 47 -- PHOTO IDENTIFICATION TO VOTE

SPONSOR: Cox

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

Upon voter approval, this constitutional amendment specifies that a person seeking to vote in person in a public election may be required by general law to identify himself or herself and verify his or her qualifications as a United States citizen and a Missouri resident by providing election officials with a form of identification that may include requiring valid government-issued photo identification. Exceptions to the identification requirement may also be provided for by general law.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill allows voters to decide what restrictions on the right to vote are acceptable. It sets a standard identical to the federal constitutional standard which does allow common sense anti-fraud measures such as the use of photographic identification.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Cox, Philip Todd, and Todd Skelton.

OPPOSERS: Those opposed to the resolution claim that it is unnecessary to modify the existing state constitution and attempt to supercede Missouri Supreme Court decisions because there are no proven instances of voter impersonation fraud in Missouri. Fundamental rights such as the right to free and fair elections should not be subject to repeal by popular vote. The resolution lacks explicit protections ensuring equality for women voters and other groups who often lack identification.

Testifying in opposition to the resolution were the Office of the Secretary of State, the ACLU of Missouri, the Missouri NEA, and Wendy Noreen.