

Voter ID requirements have a disproportionate and unfair impact on the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, senior citizens and voters with disabilities. In 2012, Rhode Island enacted a voter ID law. In 2018, we are urging legislators to repeal this law. **Two bills, 18-h 7342 and s-2448, will accomplish that. Here are some facts:**

NOT ALL RESIDENTS HAVE ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF ID.

Claims by proponents of the law that residents were sure to have an acceptable form if ID were wrong: In 2012, the RI Secretary of State's office issued over 900 free voter identification cards and reported that 190 voters requested provisional ballots because they lacked an acceptable identification.

PEOPLE ARE BEING WRONGLY DENIED THE RIGHT TO VOTE BECAUSE OF THIS LAW.

The implementation of the voter ID law has impacted the voting rights of some RI residents. In elections since the adoption of voter ID, we have had poll monitors routinely see people improperly denied the right to vote because of this law. Here are a few examples:

- In Smithfield, one voter was turned away for lack of identification. Because she arrived shortly before the polls closed, she did not return with acceptable ID and thus never got to vote.
- In Providence, a voter without ID was allowed to cast a provisional ballot, but was wrongly told he had to go to the Board of Canvassers the following day, with identification, in order to have his vote count.
- In Warwick, when a voter refused to present his ID, he was denied a provisional ballot, and wrongly told that they were available only to those UNABLE to present identification.

Anecdotal evidence from other advocacy organizations and individuals indicates voters ran into similar problems elsewhere.

THE "FAIL-SAFE" PROVISION IS NOT FAIL-SAFE.

A key element in the state's voter ID law, and one that has made it less susceptible to legal challenge than the laws of many other states, is its so-called fail-safe provision: anybody not presenting authorized ID at the polls is supposed to be offered a provisional ballot which they can fill out. If the signature on the ballot application matches that on the voting rolls, the ballot is counted just like one cast at the polling place. But this fail-safe is sometimes ignored by poll workers:

- For example, in at least one polling location in Providence, people without acceptable identification were not told about their right to a provisional ballot. The supervisor who was approached about this oversight became argumentative and defensive. The poll monitor had to show the supervisor the state-prepared signs posted at the polling place that highlighted the provisional ballot requirement. Only then did the supervisor alert poll workers to the rule.

THERE HAVE BEEN NO RECENT PROSECUTIONS OF VOTER ID FRAUD IN RI.

Considering the absence of any prosecutions in recent memory for voter identification fraud in Rhode Island, and in light of the incidents of voters without ID being denied provisional ballots, it is clear that voter ID has created more issues than it solved.