



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

Requiring Photo IDs to Vote
Vote NO on [SB150/HB639](#)

What SB150/HB639 do: SB150, sponsored by Senator Ketron, and HB639, sponsored by Representative Debra Maggart, would require voters to present a photo ID in order to vote.

ACLU-TN opposes SB150 and HB639 because:

- **Photo ID laws are the modern day equivalent of a poll tax.** The expenses involved in obtaining a photo ID card will prevent some individuals from voting. While the bills include language to allow individuals to file paupers' oaths and accompanying affidavits of indigency to waive costs, it could be uncomfortable and even humiliating to request the waiver. In addition, it is unclear how the information about the exemption will be shared and it is more likely that individuals will not go to the polls because they do not have a photo ID card.
- **Photo ID laws cause problems at polling places.** Most polling places rely on volunteers or poll workers with minimal training to check in voters and to answer questions. Additional training would pose an unnecessary strain on the poll workers' time and the states' resources. There is also a risk that inadequately trained workers could turn away and disenfranchise even properly documented voters.
- The additional steps associated with checking IDs cause longer lines at polling places. There are many reports of people not voting because of the time commitment. If people have to spend more time waiting in line, fewer voters will come to the polls.
- **There is no credible evidence that photo ID laws prevent fraud.** Proponents of voter ID laws have failed to demonstrate that individual voter fraud is a pervasive problem anywhere in the country. Multiple studies have shown there is no pattern of malicious individual voter fraud. Instead, they have found that almost all cases of voter fraud are the result of a voter making an honest mistake, and that even these mistakes are infrequent at best. Most voter fraud cases involve organized groups that have access to election machinery or have the resources to commit large-scale fraud. Voter ID laws do nothing to address this kind of large-scale fraud.
- **Restrictive photo ID cards disenfranchise legitimate voters.** These requirements typically impact minorities, seniors and limited-income and disabled persons. People who belong to these groups are less likely to have access to the documents required to obtain a photo ID.
- **We should be making it easier, not harder, for people to vote.** Nothing is more fundamental to our democracy than the right to vote. Yet voter ID laws restrict, not increase, access to the voting booth. Rather than erecting hurdles that prevent Tennesseans from voting, lawmakers must ensure that every eligible voter is allowed to vote, and that every vote counts.

What you can do: Call your state senator and house representative and ask them to Vote NO on SB150/HB639. The easiest way to contact your legislators is to visit <http://www.capitol.tn.gov>, go to "Find My Legislator," put in your address and click "search."