

America Votes Act of 2012

Introduced by Rep. Rick Larsen (WA-02)

Current Cosponsors: Mike Honda (CA-15), Emanuel Cleaver (MO-05), Gwen Moore (WI-04), G.K. Butterfield (NC-01), James Moran (VA-08), Allyson Schwartz (PA-13), Gregory Meeks (NY-06), Xavier Becerra (CA-31), Donna Edwards (MD-04), Bob Filner (CA-51), Elijah Cummings (MD-07), John Lewis (GA-05), Hansen Clarke (MI-13), Sam Farr (CA-17)

The Bill:

The America Votes Act of 2012, H.R. 6419, allows eligible voters who do not have identification documents required by their state to sign an affidavit attesting to their identity in order to cast a standard ballot at the polls. This legislation does not preempt any other federal law on voting.

The Facts:

- In the past two years, eleven state legislatures have passed new voter ID laws or measures to enhance existing laws. More than 30 states have considered such measures in 2012 alone. (National Conference of State Legislatures)
- As many as one in four African-American voters, more than one in six Hispanic voters, and about one in ten eligible voters overall do not possess a current and valid government-issued photo ID. (Brennan Center for Justice)
- According to the Brennan Center for Justice, “it is more likely that an American will be struck and killed by lightning than he will impersonate another voter at the polls.”
- In some states, voters who do not meet voter ID requirements will be issued a provisional ballot, which may require a return trip to the polls to demonstrate proof of identity. This effectively disenfranchises many eligible voters, particularly seniors who have limited access to transportation.
- This bill gives options to low-income, elderly, young and minority voters who are under threat of disenfranchisement. American Enterprise Institute scholar Norman Ornstein suggests this method as a way to protect eligible voters who do not possess formal ID documents that meet the requirements in their state from being excluded from elections. (Roll Call)
- With this bill, voters who have made the effort to vote, taking time off work, getting a ride to the polls, or otherwise making a special effort to fulfill their civic duty will not be turned away at the polls.
- This bill is common sense and preserves voting rights in America.

For more information, contact Rep. Rick Larsen’s office at (202) 225-2605.

Rev. Sept. 18, 2012