



**TESTIMONY OF AARP MINNESOTA
BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND ELECTIONS
AMY MCDONOUGH, ASSOCIATE STATE DIRECTOR-ADVOCACY
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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to addressing the needs and interests of Americans aged 50 and older. AARP is the largest membership organization in the nation representing the interests of older Americans, with more than thirty-nine million members—over 650,000 of whom live in Minnesota.

We are very concerned that a constitutional amendment on Voter ID, if passed, would hamper the ability of many older Minnesotans to vote. We believe that requiring a Voter ID will create unnecessary and costly burdens for many older voters.

A new photo ID requirement will disproportionately affect older voters because they are substantially less likely to have the required identification. Nearly one in five citizens over 65 lack a current, government-issued photo ID, according to the Brennan Center.

If Minnesota enacts a photo ID requirement in the Minnesota Constitution, most Minnesotans, if they are lucky and able-bodied, will be able to use a current driver's license. However, we live in a society where many people over 65 have given up driving privileges. They have thus given up their driver's license – and very few have replaced it with a photo ID.

For many, it will be very difficult to obtain the right documentation. Many Minnesotans over the age of 65 were born before recording births was standard procedure. While the ID itself may be free, voters – especially women -- often must purchase copies of

birth certificates, marriage licenses, divorce decrees and other documents to show name changes.

We are also very concerned about the elderly who may find themselves in transition in the months or weeks prior to Election Day. For many older Minnesotans, a move to a new facility after a health care crisis is the only move they have made after living in their own homes for decades. This is a very stressful time in their lives – and those without substantial help from family members will struggle to find the right documentation in time to vote.

AARP believes that the right to vote – along with full and fair representation – comprises the most basic of all political rights. Older individuals vote in disproportionately high numbers, and AARP has long advocated for fair and simple procedures that facilitate this high level of participation. AARP does not support procedures that reflect partisan bias, or that permit arbitrary or discriminatory reviews or voter challenges that may discourage turnout by older voters. Furthermore, while AARP supports fair and effective procedures to detect and prevent voter fraud, a constitutional amendment to require a photo ID of every voter does not further that goal.

We must maintain important voting tools in Minnesota's system that have taken into account the needs of older voters and those with disabilities. An amendment to the Minnesota Constitution would put these rights at risk, and we urge you to oppose this effort.

AARP urges you to protect the voting rights of all Minnesotans.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.