



*Verifiable, Transparent and Accurate Elections*

**Testimony of Kathy Bonnifield  
Executive Director  
Citizens for Election Integrity Minnesota**

**Before the  
Minnesota Senate Committee on Local Government and Elections  
Wednesday, February 1, 2012**

**Regarding S.F. 1577:  
Constitutional amendment for voter photographic identification (photo ID) requirement**

My name is Kathy Bonnifield and I am the Executive Director of Citizens for Election Integrity Minnesota.

I am here today to speak against a voter photo ID requirement.

The only type of fraud a voter photo ID can prevent is voter impersonation. And, we have no evidence of that occurring in Minnesota.

I am not saying that we do not have a problem. The problem that we have is felons who have voted or who have registered to vote before their civil rights are restored. And, as you know, not one single government-issued ID has someone's criminal status on it.

I am pleased with the recommendations found in the interim report of the Task Force on Election Integrity.<sup>1</sup> I'm also pleased that they will continue to study the attributes and dynamics of the North Dakota model, which allows nonincarcerated felons the right to vote. I believe that is the solution to the felon voting problem. Furthermore, studies show that

- Probationers and parolees who exercise their right to vote have significantly lower recidivism rates than those who do not.<sup>2</sup>
- Currently, one out of ten African American Minnesotans who are voting-age cannot vote.
  - If this was shifted to disenfranchising only those who are incarcerated, the number would shift to 3 or 4 out of 100.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The interim report, released on January 30, 2012, can be found at <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/>

<sup>2</sup> *Voting and the Civic Reintegration of Former Prisoners*, (Christopher Uggen and Shelly Schaefer.) University of Minnesota January 18, 2006.

[http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/1/0/4/6/4/pages104644/p104644-1](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/0/4/6/4/pages104644/p104644-1)

<sup>3</sup> *Report on Felon Disenfranchisement in Minnesota* (Christopher Uggen) March 13, 2009.

University of Minnesota Department of Sociology. [http://www.soc.umn.edu/~uggen/MNReport\\_2009.pdf](http://www.soc.umn.edu/~uggen/MNReport_2009.pdf)

Some people say that a voter photo ID is a solution in search of a problem.

**It isn't.**

It is **not** a solution.

It **is** a problem and may have unintended consequences.

For example, in the NAACP of Milwaukee's filing, three individuals reported that when they went to the DMV, the computers malfunctioned<sup>4</sup>. Thus, if they had appropriate documentation, they couldn't get an ID. The problem DMVs were in Hudson and in Milwaukee so the problem was not localized.

I am not saying that that the malfunctioning computers were intentional.

But, rather, I am expressing my concern a requirement to vote can be controlled by those who provide access to the voter photo ID. This differs from other requirements:

- After a citizen turns 18 the State cannot make them 17.
- And, while the state can determine the definition of a felony, a citizen must do something to commit a felony.
- A citizen can choose to move to Minnesota and, by doing so, determines his or her residency—yet another voting requirement.

If there is voter photo ID requirement and there's an issue with the DMV's computer system—even if it's unintentional—the citizen cannot vote. It also means that if a DMV is closed for budgetary reasons, the impact will no longer just be about a driver's license but about providing access to a ballot.

Again, unlike other voting requirements, which are controlled by the citizen, this requirement is controlled by those who provide access to the voter photo ID.

Since there is no evidence that a voter photo ID would improve the integrity of elections in Minnesota, I urge you to deeply consider the consequences—even unintentional consequences—of a voter photo ID requirement.

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<sup>4</sup> See Jennifer T. Platt, John J. Wolfe, and Mary McClintock. NAACP of Milwaukee-filing <http://www.ceimn.org/news/naacp-complaint-filed-wisconsin>