



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

MICHIGAN

EDUCATING AND ADVOCATING FOR RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT

June 15, 2012

Dear Governor Snyder:

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Michigan, I am writing to ask you to veto legislation that threatens one of our most fundamental rights – the right to vote. The bills – SB 751, SB 754, SB 803, and HB 5061 -- are part of the Safe and Fair Elections package, proposed by the Secretary of State (SOS). These measures expand photo identification requirements for voters, impose certification and SOS-approved training for third-party voter registration agencies, and require affirmation of citizenship on ballot applications. By enacting these laws, Michigan will join a dubious list of states moving backward on voting rights.

These bills have been promoted as improvements to election integrity. However, aspects of these measures are completely unnecessary and will create barriers to voting. Michigan's election system is sound and there is no evidence of problems – particularly voter fraud and registration fraud -- that these measures are intended to address.

Expanded photo ID requirements will make it more difficult for some people to vote. An estimated ten percent of voting-age Americans lacks the required type of ID. This law hits elderly, minority, low-income, and young voters hardest, since they are more likely to lack photo ID and the time and expense of obtaining it can be prohibitive. Michigan already has voter identification methods that work very well and meet federal standards.

Mandatory, SOS-approved training is a roadblock for civic organizations that want to help citizens join the voting rolls. Trained League volunteers provide an opportunity for people to register at a convenient location, such as their school, library, or community center. Additional training by the SOS office is unnecessary.

The right to vote, along with full and fair representation, is the most basic of political rights. Measures that restrict the exercise of that right should be carefully evaluated for their benefit to election integrity. These bills fail that test.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the legislation with you and answer any questions you may have. I can be reached at (734) 646-9218 or president@lwvmi.org

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Smith

Susan Smith
President