

Statement by Tim Russell, Sidney, ME on LD 34, An Act to Require a Person to Show Photographic Identification for the Purpose of Voting, February 6, 2023.

I strongly urge the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 34.

As one of 22 states with same-day voter registration (as of 2022), Maine's corresponding lack of positive voter ID requirement constitutes an open invitation for voter fraud.

A *Monmouth University* poll (https://www.monmouth.edu/polling-institute/reports/monmouthpoll_us_062121/) 80% of people said they support a photo ID requirement to cast a vote. 80%! You couldn't get 80% of people to agree on much of anything!

What's amazing – apart from the fact it's so high – is that voter ID has been one of the central fights between the two parties over the past decade or so. Yet, in this poll, a majority of Democrats (62%) say they favor a voter ID requirement. And nearly 9 in 10 independents (87%) back voter ID.

While the Monmouth poll finds photo ID requirements might be something of a high water mark, it doesn't look like an outlier. Other polls have consistently shown majority support.

Other numbers from polling for comparison: In a *CNN* poll (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/04/30/politics/cnn-poll-voting-rights/index.html>), 64% of Americans said that requiring voters to provide photo identification before casting a ballot would make elections more fair. In an *AP-NORC* poll (<https://apnews.com/article/ap-norc-poll-us-majority-back-easier-voter-registration-d4c6c40628aa4ddc56fbbd372d30dd04>), 72% of Americans said they favored requiring photo ID to vote, and in a *Pew Research Center* poll (<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/04/22/republicans-and-democrats-move-further-apart-in-views-of-voting-access/>), 76% were in favor.

There are some who claim that requiring voters to present photo identification before voting is an attack on immigrants or is unconstitutional. To them, we should ask, "How?" How is it an attack on immigrants or unconstitutional? You must have photo identification to perform any number of tasks in the United States such as viewing an R-rated movie, buying certain OTC cold remedies, buying cigarettes or alcohol, flying on commercial aircraft, closing on a home purchase, receiving care at a hospital and the list goes on. Why then is it so wrong to require a photo ID when it comes to something that affects the Election Day results?

If only legally eligible citizens can vote and proof of citizenship is required in order to register to vote, then the next logical step in helping to prevent voter fraud is to provide and require photo ID prior to voting.

People engage in voter fraud because they can. Being held accountable and being fair are not mutually exclusive when it comes to voting. Requiring photo a ID prior to voting holds people accountable and ensures they are legally entitled to vote – which is fair.

The Supreme Court has already upheld voter photo ID laws. In a 2008 ruling, Justice John Paul Stevens (considered a liberal member of the court) wrote the majority opinion and found Indiana's voter ID law "posed no excessively burdensome requirement on any class of voters."

Despite a myriad of convoluted arguments, court records reveal that voter ID opponents fail to produce any credible evidence that a legally eligible voter has been prevented from voting. If there ever was a time to restore public confidence in our elections, 2023 would be the year.

Finally, as one blogger wrote, the only voters adversely affected by the use of voter photo ID are "the fictional, the dead, the redundant and the fraudulent."

I strongly urge this committee to pass this common sense law. Thank you for your time and attention.