
Advocacy Groups Rally to Oppose Voter ID Constitutional Amendment

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Thursday morning, Senator John Murante introduced LR1CA, a constitutional amendment to explicitly allow for voter ID in Nebraska. Several nonprofit advocacy organizations have come out in opposition to the proposal.

“Frankly I’m surprised. Senator Murante just chaired the Election Technology Committee and heard about the real problems facing elections in Nebraska – voter ID isn’t a solution to any of them,” states Bri McLarty Huppert, director of voting rights with Nebraskans for Civic Reform, a statewide voting rights advocacy nonprofit. “Last time voter ID was introduced it was bracketed by a bipartisan majority because of the millions of dollars it would cost Nebraska to implement. We’re facing a \$900M deficit and outdated election technology with a hefty price tag – let’s keep our focus on the real issues facing Nebraska”

Beyond the impact voter ID could have on Nebraska’s budget, advocacy groups are pointing to the impact voter ID laws have on voters.

“This is another attempt to stop eligible Nebraska voters from casting their ballot,” said Rebecca Gonzales, racial justice coordinator at Nebraska Appleseed. “These voter suppression efforts create an unnecessary voting barrier to Nebraskans with low incomes, people who don’t drive, college students, and people with disabilities.”

The Nebraska Constitution declares that elections shall be free and there shall be no hindrance to voting. Advocacy groups point to the burden and cost to the voter to obtain proper identification.

“Whether couched in a bill or a constitutional amendment, this is still a solution in search of a problem,” states Danielle Conrad, executive director of ACLU of Nebraska. “Nebraska is fortunate to have hard working election officials that run fair election. Nebraska lawmakers should be focused on ways to remove barriers to all citizens’ abilities to exercise their voting rights – not erecting new barriers.”

Nebraskans for Civic Reform counters that election modernization bills like point of service automatic voter registration and county-to-county portability would do more to boost voter confidence in the integrity and legitimacy of Nebraska elections.

“Let’s focus on improving our elections, spending money on updating our election software so that our data management is better, providing better tools and equipment to election officials so elections run more efficiently, replacing ancient voting machines so every voter has the opportunity to vote privately and independently,” proposes McLarty Huppert.

“We’ve seen enough states go down this road to know that public confidence isn’t improved, money is wasted, and people are turned away on Election Day” McLarty Huppert concludes.

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Nebraskans for Civic Reform is a nonpartisan, non-profit organization dedicated to increasing K-12 civic engagement and community engagement, veterans job readiness, and protecting voting rights for all Nebraskans. NCR works to create a more modern and robust democracy for all Nebraskans. More information on NCR’s programs is available at www.nereform.org