

## Why should we show ID to vote?

We shouldn't!

*The LWVPT is asking members and friends to contact their representatives to the NC General Assembly to persuade them not to pass legislation that will place requirements on voters to present ID at the polling place. Read on for details and then take action!*

Through 2002 we had no requirements to show ID or to sign in at the polls. And the system worked! Voters were simply asked to state their names and where they lived.

Now things are changing, thanks to federal legislation already passed—HAVA, the Help Americans Vote Act of 2002. (Read more about HAVA in the January/February issue of the *National Voter*, 7–11.) HAVA grew out of the 2000 election and the Florida mess, but it should be noted that the “Florida mess” did not involve voter fraud—real or imagined. The problems were that state and local election officials and staff had not set up reliable procedures and rules governing recounts, how to interpret ballots, when to use provisional ballots, etc. Voter fraud was not an issue.

Among HAVA's many provisions is a troubling one that requires first-time voters who registered to vote *by mail* to provide identification at the polling place or to send a copy along with their absentee ballot. Identification may be a photo ID or a driver's license number, or the last four digits of one's social security number.

Several provisions in HAVA are discretionary. States can decide whether or not to pass legislation to implement these sections of the act.

However, two bills (H67 and H100), which go far beyond the required provisions in HAVA, have been introduced into the NC House of Representatives, in order to bring North Carolina “into compliance” with this act.

H67 was introduced by John Blust (RE, Guilford County) and cosponsored by five other Republican house members. H67 requires *voters' signatures* at the polls. This is completely new.

Should we sign in when we vote? Some might argue yes, because more and more people vote early or by absentee ballots and these voters do sign an affidavit when they vote. Therefore, it could make sense to ask all voters, even those going to the polls, to “sign in.”

They argue that boards of elections across the state could be asked to digitize the signature a citizen puts on a voter registration card. That could be scanned into the voters' record and added to poll books, so election officials could quickly compare it to the voter's signature at the polling place. Later, using presently available software, that signa-

ture could be more closely compared to the signature on the voter's registration card. On the other hand, we should not expect election officials to be handwriting specialists! And what “problem” does a signature correct?

H100 was introduced by Representative Allred. There are 14 other cosponsors, including Blust. All are Republicans. H100 requires *all* voters to show a photo ID *and* to sign in. These provisions are for federal elections, but in reality they would apply to all elections, because elections offices cannot maintain two registration databases and two sets of elections procedures.

Requiring a photo ID is just wrong. A photo ID does not prevent fraud! We all know that it is easy to get a driver's license. It is the way criminals begin establishing an alias.

### ***Take action now!***

H67 and H100 have been referred to the House Committee on Election Law and Campaign Finance Reform, cochaired by Representatives Michaux and Stam. Guilford and Forsyth members of the committee are John Blust (RE, House Dist. 62), Earline Parmon (DE, House Dist. 72), and Steve Wood (DE, House Dist. 61).

Call the House switchboard [(919) 733-4111] to speak with these persons or leave a message for them. Tell them that you do not support requiring voters to present a photo ID or any other identification. We should not require any restriction on voting beyond the provision already in the Help Americans Vote Act—and that, in fact, we don't agree with some of the provisions of HAVA.

Also, call your own representative to the NC House and tell him or her that you want them to vote against H67 and H100 if those bills are voted out of committee. Find your representative at [www.ncga.state.nc.us/](http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/)

So, asking for a picture ID gains nothing. It will only make voting more difficult for those without a driver's license.

What do we do today in North Carolina? When we register by mail or in person, by our signature we vow that we are who we say we are and that we live where we say we live. And, it is a felony to lie about that.

Later, we receive a little card from the Board of Elections that notifies us of our precinct and polling place and tells us what districts we are in. Some voters present this card at the polls, but they should not. It is not an ID card, it is a card sent to them only for their information.

Going beyond this is unnecessary and a barrier to voting. Remember that poll taxes, literacy tests, identification, even registration lists have always been required to *prevent* people from voting!

## *Help Americans Vote Act*

# Parts of HAVA may hamper voting, invade privacy

by B.J. Weatherby

Even though the US Congress overwhelmingly passed the Help Americans Vote Act (and George Bush reluctantly signed it), there are troubling provisions.

One, which is supposed to be implemented by January 2004, is that every state must create a “single, uniform, official, centralized, computerized, interactive statewide voter registration list.” The state, not individual localities, will be responsible for voter registration lists. The state list, not the county list, will determine who is eligible to vote in federal elections (and, for all intents and purposes, in all other elections as well). This may sound good, but it is not! The purpose for this, it is maintained, is to help remove duplicate registrations. Yet, consider this: two voters with the same name and birth date could be erroneously assumed to be the same person and, as a result, one could be eliminated from the statewide database. When the person who was eliminated goes to vote, he will be denied a ballot, because he is no longer registered and is not in the local poll book. A statewide database will *cause* mistakes and will prohibit eligible persons from voting.

HAVA supporters will counter that this won't happen, because HAVA will require, once the statewide lists are up and running, that a person registering to vote must provide either a driver's license number or the last four digits of his/her Social Security number. As noted in the preceding article, getting a driver's license is easy and sometimes a driver's license is used to establish a new, fraudulent identity. And, to me, requiring any part of one's Social Security number makes all of us more vulnerable to identify theft, which is too common in today's world.

Additionally, HAVA specifies that states will have federal authority to link voter registration databases to motor vehicle and other state agencies required to offer voter registration under the National Voter Registration Act. Wow! All sorts of people will have access to information about us. And all sorts of errors can be made as this “interactive” information is shared and manipulated along the way.

Today, when Guilford County elections staff gets lists of possible duplicate voters, they carefully investigate to determine whether a person has moved or whether there are two people with the same names and birthdays. If they can't determine that, they leave the voter in the database. Even when they have found that the same person is registered in two counties they have reviewed voting records and found that the person has not voted in both places. People just don't vote in two places. The penalty for voter fraud is harsh; impersonating someone else or voting more than once is just not worth a felony charge.

Another reason to oppose a statewide registration list is that the voter registration database Guilford County uses is a far more sophisticated computer program than that used by the state of North Carolina. Our program is much superior, and the simpler database the state uses just wouldn't work for us!

It also seems silly to me that this legislation uses a driver's license as an ID. After all the league went through to get “motor voter” passed (the National Voter Registration Act), doesn't it seem illogical to allow someone to get a driver's license and then to register to vote using that license as ID?

It is my view that we should lobby our Congressional representatives to repeal parts of HAVA!

Remember, new voting legislation was initiated because systems, procedures, and training were lacking in the 2000 presidential election in Florida and elsewhere. Voter fraud was not an issue.

Is there fraud? Precious little! Ninety-eight percent of all voting is routine. In the last two percent, inconsistencies (not fraud) are most often resolved by the elections staff. But problems could not be resolved at the state or federal levels.

So why have our elected representatives been so eager to throw up roadblocks to voting and so eager to make information about us so accessible to so many? □