

<http://www2.scnow.com/news/2011/apr/18/letter-editor-voter-will-be-far-more-costly-advert-ar-1732455/>



Published: April 18, 2011

[Home](#) / [news](#) / [opinion](#) / [mailbag](#) /

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Voter will be far more costly than advertised

By Dear Editor:

The author is president of the League of Women Voters, Florence area.

“Voter ID, what’s the big deal?” seems to be the prevailing reaction to the pending bill requiring all prospective voters to provide photo id at the polls. “If you don’t have a driver’s license, just get a photo ID at DMV.”

Let us start with the obvious: If you need a government-issued photo ID, that means that you do not drive, as all South Carolina driver’s licenses include a photograph of the registrant. In order to go to DMV, you will need to beg a ride or pay for a taxi or bus, as DMV offices are within walking distance of few residences. In any event, it will cost you half a day to get that ID.

Once obtained, that hard-won ID will expire after five years, although driver’s licenses are good for 10 years. I can well imagine that being dependent on others for rides might age one faster, but is this a valid reason to require non-drivers to re-register twice as often as drivers? Should we require the same of sun-worshippers, smokers, and those addicted to plastic surgery, as their appearances will also change more rapidly than those of the general population?

While estimates of the actual cost to South Carolinians to implement this requirement vary, the minimum cost to purchase cameras and photo supplies in the first year will be \$1.35 million, according to the state Board of Economic Advisors. This expense does not include required voter education, poll worker education, extended hours and/or locations to issue the new IDs, and additional election personnel, including judges to review challenged ballots. A more realistic estimate, based on Indiana’s recent costs for its own voter ID law, is at least \$10 million over three years.

Supporters claim that any cost is well worth it, in order to protect our elections against fraud. While allegations of fraud surface every election, South Carolina has no – not even one – documented cases of voter impersonation.

While our beloved state is suffering severe financial distress, is this the time to throw millions of dollars at a problem that exists only in some imaginations?

Sara B Stewart

Florence

SCNOW © Copyright 2011 Media General Communications Holdings, LLC. A Media General company.