

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FROM: Representative Dan Frankel
SUBJECT: Co-sponsor Legislation – “Every Voter Counts” package

In an effort to mitigate some of the more damaging provisions of the recently enacted Voter ID legislation and to also bring voter registration practices into the 21st century, I will soon introduce four pieces of legislation as a package that I am calling the “Every Voter Counts” package.

The intent of this package is to:

- Help registered voters obtain the photo identification now needed to cast a ballot;
- Ensure that voters who are forced to cast provisional ballots because of the new Voter ID requirements are able to receive updates about the status of their ballot and information about how to appeal if the ballot is rejected; and
- Create an online voter registration system.

The first bill would require the Department of State to create a mobile voter outreach program to educate residents of the Commonwealth about our new voter identification laws and to provide free photo identification to those who need it in order to vote. Mobile voter outreach programs were strongly recommended in the Baker-Carter Commission report, the same report touted by some as a reason for enacting voter identification legislation in the first place. With today’s technology –a laptop and a camera – we can visit community centers, senior centers, and vocational schools, and help registered voters obtain the photo identification they now need to cast a ballot. Rhode Island runs such a program, with a cost of only \$150,000 annually. Even considering Pennsylvania’s larger size and population, we could still run such a program with the money dedicated to voter ID in the budget.

The second bill would waive the fees for a birth certificate if an individual is seeking the birth certificate in order to obtain state-issued photo identification. The Commonwealth already provides this service for Veterans. Additionally, this legislation would require the state to reimburse individuals up to \$50 for the cost of an out-of-state birth certificate needed to obtain photo identification in Pennsylvania.

The third bill would allow individuals forced to vote by provisional ballot because of the new ID law to include contact information so that the individual can receive updates and reminders regarding the status of his or her provisional ballot and information about how to appeal if the ballot is rejected.

Finally, the fourth bill would be identical to Senator Smucker’s SB 1515, a bi-partisan effort to create online voter registration in Pennsylvania. Eleven other states already allow for online registration.

I believe the “Every Voter Counts” package creates common sense solutions to some of the hardships caused by the Voter ID law that was passed and signed earlier this year and helps bring our voter registration process up to date. If you are worried about how our senior citizens, disabled citizens, veterans and other affected individuals will cope with the new voting requirements in Pennsylvania, I hope you will consider supporting all four of these measures.

If you would like to cosponsor this piece of important legislation, please contact Carrie in my office by phone (705-7019) or by email (cgoodyea@pahouse.net).