



May 8, 2007

Dear Member of Congress,

Attached is a letter sent by the National Network for Election Reform in response to the most recent attempt to pass additional photo-identification requirements in the 109th Congress. It is our understanding that a similarly focused amendment will be offered during the markup of H.R. 811, the Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2007. On behalf of the National Network for Election Reform, we wish to reiterate our continued opposition to such attempts and encourage Committee members to oppose any such amendment should it be offered. Thank you.

Signed,

Tanya Clay House  
Director, Public Policy  
People For the American Way

Jonah Goldman  
Director, National Campaign for Fair Elections  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law



September 19, 2006

Dear Member of Congress,

We write on behalf of the National Network for Election Reform in strong opposition to H.R. 4844, the deceptively titled "Federal Election Integrity Act of 2006." The National Network is a coalition of organizations committed to providing Americans with a responsive and fair election system. As written, the bill will sacrifice the integrity of our electoral process by imposing an unfunded mandate on the states and blocking countless eligible seniors, minority voters, poor voters, students and young voters, and voters with disabilities from the polls. Moreover, H.R. 4844 will do nothing to address the shortcomings with America's electoral infrastructure. Instead, by passing H.R. 4844, Congress will create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century poll tax.

In August, Congress demonstrated its commitment to a fair and open democratic process by reauthorizing the expiring provisions of the Voting Rights Act with unprecedented bi-partisan unity. Passing H.R. 4844 will undermine that noble pursuit by disfranchising the very Americans that the Voting Rights Act protects.

H.R. 4844 will require nearly every eligible American voter to navigate a new and complex bureaucracy in order to cast a ballot. Additionally, this measure will force the vast majority of states to implement an incredibly costly new process for issuing identification. The bill's central provision requires all eligible voters to produce a government-issued photo identification before participating in the electoral process. According to the mandates of the bill, the only acceptable form of identification is one that requires proof of citizenship as a condition of its issuance and indicates citizenship status on the face of the identification. Currently, the only types of identification that satisfy this requirement are a few states' driver's licenses, and a United States Passport – which, according to the Bureau of Consular Affairs, only 25-27% of Americans have. For the rest of the country, state governments will have to develop and issue new identification in order to facilitate voting in federal elections.

Designing and implementing a program that will facilitate identification to comply with H.R. 4844 will be an unprecedented burden on state governments. A recent example portends the drastic complications that states will have to navigate in order to meet the demands of H.R. 4844. In 2002, Congress created the Transportation Workers Identity Credential, a program to provide identification similar to that required by H.R. 4844 for the nation's 750,000 critical sea, air and land transportation facility workers by the end of 2003. Nearly three years past the deadline, fewer than 5,000 of these workers have been issued this identification and the program costs have skyrocketed, nearly doubling from the original projections. This demonstrates that requiring the vast majority of states to engage in this type of endeavor for nearly 200 million Americans is not only unworkable, but irresponsible.

The unfunded mandate that this bill will create, coupled with the financially precarious situation of many state budgets, means that citizens will be burdened with the increased cost of this program. In addition to the high price that many voters will be forced to pay to obtain this new form of identification, each voter will also be required to produce proof of citizenship. Official citizenship documents, such as birth certificates, passports or naturalization papers, are expensive and time-consuming to obtain. While this burden is heavy on all Americans, voters in poor and minority communities, seniors, students and young voters, voters with disabilities, and Americans in rural areas



are the voters who are least likely to have documents that prove their citizenship and are the least likely to be able to afford the increased cost of obtaining both the underlying documentation and the new identification required by H.R. 4844. Requiring citizens to pay for these documents as a prerequisite to voting constitutes a poll tax in violation of the Twenty-Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Proponents of H.R. 4844 claim that this measure is necessary to prevent misconduct in elections; that assertion, however, is contradicted by overwhelming evidence. There are no facts to suggest our elections are plagued by a wave of individuals voting multiple times or voting as someone else. Likewise, despite detailed investigations across the country, there is almost no evidence of non-citizens voting. This is not surprising since each act of this type of voter fraud carries with it possible penalties of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. Individuals know that the risk is not worth the cost. In addition to these harsh penalties, non-citizens would sacrifice their ability to become citizens or remain in this country legally. Undocumented immigrants would risk announcing their presence to a government official each time they attempted to register or vote. Effective safeguards are already in place to protect election results from being manipulated by ineligible voters.

H.R. 4844 will do nothing to address the systemic problems that plague our democratic process nor will it effectively secure our election administration system. Because of the bill's failure to address the needs of American voters, it will not restore public confidence in the electoral process. Since the presidential election in 2000, voters across the country have begun to notice the shortcomings in our electoral system. Congress has the opportunity to address the real obstacles that voters face each time they go to the polling place; unfortunately, H.R. 4844 chooses instead to create additional barriers.

We oppose H.R. 4844, the "Federal Election Integrity Act of 2006," because it imposes an unfunded mandate on the states and blocks countless eligible voters from the electoral process. We urge you to oppose H.R. 4844. For more information, please contact Jonah Goldman, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, (202) 662-8321 or Tanya Clay House, People For the American Way, (202) 467-2341.

Signed,

African American Ministers in Action  
American Association of University Women  
American Jewish Committee  
Anti-Defamation League  
Asian American Justice Center  
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Brennan Center for Justice  
Common Cause  
Demos  
Electronic Frontier Foundation  
FairVote  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
League of United Latin American Citizens  
League of Young Voters Education Fund  
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund  
MassVote

NAACP  
National Congress of American Indians  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Education Association  
National Voting Rights Institute  
People For the American Way  
Project Vote  
Rock the Vote  
Service Employees International Union  
The Arc of the United States  
Union for Reform Judaism  
United Cerebral Palsy  
United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries  
U.S. PIRG  
Vote By Mail Project

