

No Voter Photo ID Required at November Election

Melrose, WI – Voters in the Village of Melrose **do not** need to show a photo ID to vote at the November 4, 2014 Election. On October 9, 2014, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned an earlier 7th Circuit Court of Appeals decision which had reinstated the photo ID law. The law had been enjoined by the courts since March, 2012.

According to the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board, the Supreme Court's order is not the final word on the legality of Wisconsin's voter photo ID law, but it does set the rules for the General Election. The Supreme Court halted enforcement of the law for the time being to avoid voter confusion and because some voters had already been mailed absentee ballots without instructions on how to comply with the voter photo ID law. The Supreme Court may decide to hear the case on its merits sometime after the November election.

Even though voters will not have to show an ID to receive a ballot at this election, voters who are registering between now and Election Day should be aware that they may use their driver license or state ID card to establish their residence if it contains a current address.

“You may use a valid driver license or state ID card for proof of residence when you register to vote, either before or on Election Day” said Kevin Kennedy, Wisconsin's chief elections officer. “But you are not required to show a photo ID to get your ballot.”

All voters must show proof of residence to register to vote, and a driver license or state ID card with a current address are just two of many documents can use to prove they are residents. A full list is available here: <http://gab.wi.gov/publications/voter-guides/proof-of-residence>.

Also, voters who have a Wisconsin driver license or state ID card are required to provide the card number on the voter registration form. Voters who do not have a driver license or state ID card can use the last four digits of their Social Security number instead.

Absentee Voting

Absentee voters who may have received a letter in recent weeks telling them to provide a photocopy of their ID card that they may disregard the letter. Some voters who requested or received absentee ballots before the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals decision on September 12 would have needed to provide a copy of their ID, but the Supreme Court's order on October 9 made that unnecessary.

Be Prepared

Because the Supreme Court may someday reinstate voter photo ID in Wisconsin, the G.A.B. is advising anyone who does not have a state ID card to take advantage of the opportunity to get one for free. The Wisconsin Division of Motor Vehicles has a process to allow people to obtain a free State ID card for voting purposes, even if the person does not have a birth certificate.

Kennedy said that process can take time, especially for people born outside of Wisconsin, so it makes sense to get started early. More information is available at the Wisconsin DMV website: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/drivers/apply/petition-process.htm>. If the voter photo ID law is not reinstated, voters can still use the state ID card for proof of residence when registering, he said.

For specific questions about voting, please contact my office at (608) 488-3191.

Voters are also encouraged to visit the Wisconsin Government Accountability's voter services website, www.myvote.wisconsin.gov, for information about voting.