



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on November 8, 2011

## Democrats to State Secretaries: Keep Voting Requirements Loose

Nearly 200 Democrats, led by Maryland leftist Rep. [Steny Hoyer](#), the [Democrat Whip](#), signed a letter that went to Secretaries across the country.

States that pass photo-identification and other laws, Hoyer disingenuously argues, are “suppressing” votes and undermining “democracy,” at least as he and some of the most radical Congressmen define “democracy.”

### The Letter

The missive begins innocently enough, with a warning that bipartisanship against “voter suppression” is dying because of evil Republicans, although the letter, of course, does not forthrightly finger the pachyderm party.

The 196 Democrats wrote to “express our collective concern that the bipartisan consensus and partnership between all levels of government, which for decades has been a central principle of election administration, is deteriorating.”

Throughout the years, the Voting Rights Act and strenuous efforts of election officials nationwide have secured the right to vote for all, the letter said, noting that progress in voting rights, by which the Democrats mean ensuring that blacks in the South could vote.

“But a disturbing trend is emerging,” the letter continues, noting the many states that are passing voter ID laws to stop fraud, particularly by illegal aliens. Those most important of those laws require a photo ID to vote and proof of citizenship.

Election legislation and administration appear to be increasingly the product of partisan plays. Election officials are seen as partisan combatants, rather than stewards of our democracy. It is critical for our democracy that this does not continue. Voting hours, voting sites, identification requirements, voter registration regulation and access to mail ballots should not be used as weapons to achieve a preferred electoral outcome.

Repeating a Democrat theme, the letter urges the secretaries “to put partisan considerations aside and serve as advocates for enfranchisement,” then actually says that “history has taught us that our democracy has suffered far more from elected officials who chose to deny some of our citizens the opportunity to vote than from any other cause. There is no greater threat to our democracy than a diminished belief that the rules are fair and fairly administered.”

Actually, history hasn’t taught us that, and many threats to our democracy are “greater” than stopping vote fraud. But the letter goes on:





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Whether it is an elderly woman unable to locate her birth certificate for purposes of establishing her U.S. citizenship on election day or a college student whose school-issued identification is not among the IDs deemed acceptable for voting or a disabled veteran whose local polling place has not yet been made accessible, public officials on all levels of government should be striving to facilitate their right to vote, not make it more difficult.

We stand willing and ready to work in a bipartisan manner with our Republican counterparts in the U.S. Congress, as well as with state and local officials across the country, to guarantee to every citizen the right to vote and the certainty that every citizen's vote will be counted.

The "elderly woman" to whom the letter refers is, presumably, [a 96-year-old black lady](#) in Tennessee, but it does not appear the Democrats can find many real Americans or eligible voters unable to cast ballots as long as they can present valid ID. A key voting bloc for Democrats is minorities, so raising the issue of racial discrimination in voting is an unsurprising tactic. The Democrats may well face a shellacking in the next election, and indeed Hoyer mentioned 2012 in the first line of his remarks about the issue.

Said Hoyer, "A year from now, millions of Americans will head to the polls to exercise their most fundamental right — the right to vote."

Unfortunately, in states across the country, partisan measures have been adopted that would make it more difficult for nearly five million voters, particularly the poor, young people, the elderly, and minorities, to register and vote. Voter suppression has no place in our country. That's why Democrats are sending a letter to Secretaries of State urging them to oppose these partisan efforts to hinder access to the ballot and urging them to work in a bipartisan way to ensure all Americans can exercise their constitutional right to be heard.

### **Photo ID Laws**

For years, Democrats have been trying to make voting no different than purchasing a Coke at the 7-Eleven. Their main accomplishment, the so-called [motor-voter law](#) of 1933, has led to massive vote fraud, critics argue.

But with illegal aliens [flooding the country](#), the GOP, which controls many state legislatures, is passing laws to ensure that only eligible voters cast ballots.

[According to USA Today](#), "The measures, all passed by Republican-controlled legislatures, could bring to 17 the number of states with photo ID requirements and come nearly 18 months before elections for Congress and the White House."

Other states — including Florida, Georgia, Tennessee and West Virginia — have reduced the period for early voting.

In Florida, a key battleground state, a law signed last month by Republican Gov. Rick Scott also restricts efforts to register new voters by groups such as the League of Women Voters.

"It's remarkable," Jennie Bowser, a senior fellow at the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), said of the proliferation of new laws. In all, 33 states have considered new voter ID laws this year. "I very rarely see one single issue come up in so many state legislatures in a single session," she said. "This issue has historically fallen along stark partisan lines. Democrats tend to oppose voter ID, and Republicans tend to favor it. This



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year, there are a lot of new Republican majorities in legislatures.”

[Measures in North Carolina](#) and [New Hampshire failed](#).

[According to](#) the NCSL, a mere seven states require photo ID, while another seven “request” it, permitting voters to present some other ID to vote. After that, only another 16 states require any form of ID to vote. So 20 states permit voting without verifying that the person casting a ballot is an eligible voter.

## Bad Idea

The [Brennan Center for Justice](#) at New York University’s School of Law, [named for](#) leftist Supreme Court Justice [William Brennan](#), [says millions](#) will be affected by changes in voting laws in 2012.

[According to](#) the center, “These new restrictions fall most heavily on young, minority, and low-income voters, as well as on voters with disabilities.”

This wave of changes may sharply tilt the political terrain for the 2012 election. Already 19 new laws and two new executive actions are in place. At least 42 bills are still pending, and at least 68 more were introduced but failed. Already, it is clear that:

- These new laws could make it significantly harder for more than five million eligible voters to cast ballots in 2012.
- The states that have already cut back on voting rights will provide 171 electoral votes in 2012 — 63 percent of the 270 needed to win the presidency.

The [Center warns](#) that “states have changed their laws so rapidly that no single analysis has assessed the overall impact. It is too early to exactly quantify how the changes will impact voter turnout, but we know they will be a hindrance to many voters at a time when the United States continues to turn out less than two thirds of its eligible citizens in presidential elections and less than half in midterm elections.”

The center [also claims](#) that voter ID and other laws will adversely affect 5 million voters. The most significant laws, of course, are photo ID laws, which will affect 3.2 million voters, the center claims, with another 250,000 affected by proof-of-citizenship laws. The list of “affected” voters goes on from there.

Given that Hispanics [overwhelmingly vote](#) for Democrats, and that illegal aliens are mostly Hispanics, it is no surprise that Democrats oppose laws that would toughen the ID required to vote.

## High Court Settled Matter

Should Democrats fight the laws in court, they face an uphill battle. In 2008, the [U.S. Supreme Court upheld](#) Indiana’s photo ID law, noting that the state had a “valid interest” in ensuring that everyone who casts a ballot is eligible to do so.

In [Crawford vs. Marion County Election Board](#), the court voted 6-3 to uphold Indiana’s law.

As per usual, leftist plaintiffs claimed the law was unfair to minorities because they often don’t have valid ID and that the law was *prima facie* unconstitutional. The court rejected that argument, noting that the plaintiffs had failed to prove the requirement had harmed anyone.

Three justices, Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas, and Samuel Alito [arguing in a concurring opinion](#) that “the law should be upheld because its overall burden is minimal and justified.”



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