



The American
Civil
Rights
Union



Voting
Integrity
Institute

April 18, 2017

Legislative Activity

VOTER ID

IOWA: The Republican-controlled Iowa Legislature has passed a bill that will require identification at the polls and reduce the number of early voting days. The Senate approved the bill 28-21 Thursday. The House approved it earlier this month. It now heads to Republican Gov. Terry Branstad, who has indicated he supports requiring ID to vote. The legislation would require people to show acceptable identification at the polls. The Secretary of State will provide identification to people who register to vote but do not request or need a driver's license or state ID from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Another provision will reduce early voting before a general election from 40 days to 29 days. It also eliminates a straight party voting option. The bill requires that absentee ballot requests include the registered voter's voter verification number (driver's license or state ID number), and implements electronic poll books statewide. Gov. Branstad is expected to sign the bill sometime next week. Changes would not take effect until 2019.

<http://wqad.com/2017/04/13/iowa-passes-bill-requiring-voter-id-heads-to-governor/>

To follow the status of the bill:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=87&ba=HF516>

More explanation and analysis:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/FN/855805.pdf>

NORTH DAKOTA: HB 1369 Voter ID bill, eliminating affidavit option; Section 2 provides the ID requirements to prove eligibility of voters. Section 3 strengthens the residency requirements for voting. Section 5 requires the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) to provide the citizenship status of individuals to the Secretary of State. A review of Sections 10, 11, and 12 further directs the NDDOT to issue driver's licenses and nondriver's ID cards to noncitizens in a manner that makes them distinguishable from those given citizens. This provision enables poll workers will be able to tell if the individual appearing to vote is a citizen or not before ever giving them a ballot. <http://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/65-2017/documents/17-0750-05000.pdf>

Under a proposed law, voters who show up unprepared will be allowed to sign an affidavit, then vote with a set-aside ballot. The ballot would be counted only if that voter showed proper ID to an election official within six days. "It's going to give everybody an opportunity to vote now. The absentee ballot will work better. It'll work better with the election and the voter's process," said Sen. Richard Marcellais, D-Belcourt. Marcellais is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, members of which sued the state to allow for the current affidavit system. Rep. Pam Anderson, D-Fargo, voted to send the bill to the Senate out of conference committee, but said it may not stand up to a similar court challenge.

<http://www.valleynewslive.com/content/news/ND-Lawmakers-approaching-changes-to-voter-ID-law-419514073.html>

Status: On April 17, the North Dakota House Conference Committee adopted the report and it went to the North Dakota Senate for review. The adopted language appears to have gained some bipartisan support.

To follow the status of the bill:

<http://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/65-2017/bill-actions/ba1369.html>

AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION

INDIANA: The automatic voter registration bill was watered down to only a slight revision to the voter registration process at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. A measure sponsored by state Rep. Clyde Kersey aimed at improving voter turnout cleared the Indiana House on Wednesday and now awaits the signature of Gov. Eric Holcomb. House members concurred with Senate changes to House Bill 1178. The measure is the only piece of election reform that appears likely to pass this session, according to Kersey, D-Terre Haute. House Bill 1178 requires Bureau of Motor Vehicles employees to ask each person conducting business at the local license branch if they would like to register to vote. If the answer is yes, the employee must provide the forms to register, then additional information on how to file the paperwork with the county voter registration office. http://www.tribstar.com/news/local_news/voter-registration-bill-sent-to-governor-s-desk/article_ffd61599-ddd8-58f8-b422-012d81ce3383.html

To follow the status of the bill:

<https://iga.in.gov/legislative/2017/bills/house/1178>

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

NORTH CAROLINA: State legislative leaders and Democrat Gov. Roy Cooper are likely headed for another veto fight, this time over a measure that would reconfigure the state's oversight of elections, ethics and lobbying. Lawmakers sent the bill to Cooper's desk last Tuesday. In December 2016 during a special session, state lawmakers approved a proposal to do away with the existing State Board of Elections and replace it with the state's ethics board, half appointed by the governor and the other half appointed by state lawmakers. That law also gave Republicans control of all local elections boards in each election year. Cooper sued to block the law, saying it violated the separation of powers in the state constitution, and a three-judge panel agreed last month. Senate Bill 68 is an attempt to revive some of that enjoined law, crafted to avoid the constitutional pitfalls that plagued the first version.

It would still put what's now the State Ethics Commission in charge of elections, campaign finance and lobbying regulation. The governor would appoint all eight members of the new board – four from each party – although he or she would be limited to nominations submitted by the parties. He or she would also have the authority to remove any board member who misses more than two consecutive meetings. "We believe that combining these functions under one board is the better way to go forward in trying to administer elections, campaign finance, lobbying and ethics," said House sponsor Rep. David Lewis, R-Harnett. Senate Bill 68, like the earlier law, increases the size of county boards of elections from three to four members, two from each party, which critics warn will be a recipe for "deadlock and dysfunction." But supporters of the measure say tied votes can be resolved by the state board with a simple majority vote of five members.

Lewis said having equal party representation on local and state elections boards will increase public confidence that their elections are being run in a bipartisan manner. The final version of the proposal passed the House 72-42 with little debate on April 11, and quickly moved to the Senate.

<http://www.wral.com/veto-fight-ahead-over-elections-board-rewrite/16638956/>

To follow the status of the bill:

<http://ncleg.net/gascripts/BillLookUp/BillLookUp.pl?Session=2017&BillID=S68&submitButton=Go>

VOTER REGISTRATION

GEORGIA: Georgians could continue to use federal tribal identification cards as proof of citizenship but would face a 26-month deadline to correct any discrepancies on their voter registration forms under a bill sent to Republican Gov. Nathan Deal for his signature. House Bill 268, sponsored by state Rep. Barry Fleming, R-Harlem, is generally considered a cleanup of the state's election code but has drawn the ire of some voter advocacy groups. They want Deal to veto the measure because they claim it violates the spirit of a recent legal settlement over how Georgia verifies voter registration information.

<http://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional-govt--politics/elections-bill-with-month-voter-verification-deadline-sent-deal/0INf96l6yuQJwCP5tQ7szM/>

To follow the status of the bill:

<http://www.legis.ga.gov/legislation/en-US/Display/20172018/HB/268>

FLORIDA: SB 1070 and SB 1072 legislation allowing interstate data-sharing, sponsored by Republican Senator Travis Hutson, passed out of committee; similar legislation, HB 707, is sponsored by Republican state Rep. Ross Spano.

To follow the status of the bill: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2017/01070>
and <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2017/01072>