



May 2, 2017

Legislative Activity

VOTER ID

MAINE: Democrats rejected requiring voters to present photo IDs. On a largely party-line vote, Democrats quashed legislation that Republicans said would fight vote fraud. The Maine House rejected a bill that would have required voters to present photo identification at their polling places in order to cast a ballot. Majority Democrats prevailed on a 76-67 vote that split mostly on party lines in rejecting L.D. 121, which sought to make voters provide proof of identity with photo ID such as a driver's license or state-issued identification card. <http://www.pressherald.com/2017/04/25/maine-house-rejects-requiring-voters-to-present-photo-ids/>

NORTH DAKOTA: Gov. Doug Burgum signed House Bill 1369. It comes amid a federal lawsuit challenging changes made by the Republican-led Legislature in the past two sessions. The bill allows those who don't bring a valid ID to the polls to cast a ballot that's set aside until they produce an ID. If an ID doesn't include required information or is out of date, a voter could use a current utility bill, bank statement, government-issued check, paycheck or government document to supplement the ID. "The right to vote is a powerful underpinning of American democracy, and this legislation protects that right while offering eligible citizens multiple and straightforward opportunities to legally cast their ballot," Burgum said in a statement. "House Bill 1369 strengthens the integrity of our elections by ensuring all voters have proper identification while allowing those without current or complete forms of ID to provide supplemental documents to verify their eligibility." http://bismarcktribune.com/news/state-and-regional/burgum-signs-voter-id-bill-amid-lawsuit/article_bec91fc2-dd86-531f-9812-cd9b4cd57bc4.html

To follow the status of the bill:

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

FELON VOTING

NEBRASKA: Republican Gov. Pete Ricketts last Thursday vetoed a bill that would have allowed ex-felons to bypass a two-year waiting period and vote as soon as they complete a prison sentence or probation. In his veto letter, Ricketts said that while rehabilitating criminals is an important goal, the immediate restoration of voting rights is not the answer. About 30 percent of felons commit another crime within a few years after release from prison, he said. While supporters of the bill contend that being able to vote increases civic engagement and helps to reduce the risk of committing more crimes, studies have failed to demonstrate a link between restoring voting rights and reduced recidivism, he said. Nebraska's recidivism rate is 31.3 percent, defined as people who were discharged from prison in fiscal year 2013 and returned to prison in the next three fiscal years. "Requiring convicted felons to wait before allowing them to vote provides an incentive to maintain a clean record and avoid subsequent convictions," Ricketts said in his veto letter to the Legislature. Ricketts also has concerns that restoring the right to vote contradicts the process set out in Nebraska's constitution. The sole power of restoring civil rights to felons rests with the Board of Pardons, he said. And the Legislature may not circumvent the

constitution. "LB75 is attempting to create the equivalent of a legislative pardon," he said. "This is not permissible under the constitution." On the three votes on the bill, Democrat Sen. Justin Wayne had 27 to 32 votes of support. The final reading vote was 27-13, with 7 senators present not voting.

http://journalstar.com/legislature/ricketts-vetoes-bill-that-would-give-ex-felons-right-to/article_8b11fcf0-97d4-579b-860f-e099334ef91a.html

To follow the legislation: http://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_bill.php?DocumentID=30782

VOTE FRAUD

ARIZONA: The House and Senate sent SB 1370 to the governor for signature. The bill restores the ability of the Attorney General to prosecute double voting.

The bill language:

<http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/53leg/1R/bills/SB1370S.htm>

To follow the status of the bill:

<https://apps.azleg.gov/BillStatus/BillOverview?SessionID=117>

ABSENTEE MAIL BALLOTS

TEXAS: A House committee is considering changes to mail-in ballot procedures in an effort to restrict activities of the "politiquera," a familiar figure in South Texas. A "politiquera" is a campaign worker or vote broker who drives people to the polls or takes mail-in ballots. In different election cycles, some politiqueras were accused of election fraud and preying upon the elderly. The Texas House Committee on Elections reported HB 3425 out of committee. Proposed changes to the Texas Election Code include decreasing the number of mail-in ballots a person can handle to two ballots and a heavier penalty for those who violate the statute.

http://www.themonitor.com/news/local/article_826e7d1c-2a26-11e7-9aa6-a7b6360a94f9.html

To follow the status of the bill:

<http://www.legis.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=85R&Bill=HB3425>

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

NORTH CAROLINA: Republican lawmakers voted to override Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's veto of a bill that reduces his authority over state elections. The House completed the override on April 25, a day after the Senate cast a similar vote that exceeded the three-fifths majorities required to enact the law despite Cooper's objections. The measure creates a combined state elections and ethics board with equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans. Local elections boards also would be evenly divided as well. North Carolina law has given the sitting governor's party a majority of elections board seats for more than a century. GOP leaders say the measure is designed to promote bipartisan cooperation in administering elections. "This bill provides a good pathway forward ... (so) each and every person can fully participate in the election process and exercise their constitutional right to vote," Rep. David Lewis, R-Harnett, the new law's chief proponent, said before the House's 75-44 override vote.

<https://apnews.com/f44a4270830f48239435fadbfdf174b>

The bill can be found at this link: <http://ncleg.net/Sessions/2017/Bills/Senate/PDF/S68v5.pdf>