



**National
Urban League**

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Pennsylvania is Latest Defeat for Voter ID**

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Delay of Pennsylvania Voter ID law is *"A big win...You don't need a photo ID to vote in November."* David Gersh, lawyer who challenged the law

Last week's ruling by Pennsylvania Judge Robert Simpson delaying the implementation of the state's new voter ID law is the latest in a string of defeats for voter suppression advocates who are failing in their attempts to disenfranchise millions of voters and unfairly sway the November presidential election. With less than a month to go before the election, legal challenges brought by the U.S. Justice Department and others have resulted in blocking the implementation of discriminatory voter ID laws in Wisconsin, Texas, and South Carolina, in addition to the all important swing state of Pennsylvania. Proposed laws in Alabama and Mississippi are also not likely to be approved before November 6th because of continuing Justice Department scrutiny. Virtually everywhere these laws have been challenged they have been weakened, defeated or delayed. This is a tribute to the power of civil rights and citizen action and a sharp rebuke to those who seek to change the rules of the game for their own political ends.

While these new voter ID laws have sprung up around the country ostensibly to combat voter fraud, proponents have been hard pressed to present evidence to support that claim. In fact, In Pennsylvania no cases of voter fraud have been reported in the past decade. On the other hand, if the law had been allowed to take effect, more than 80,000 eligible Pennsylvania voters may have been turned away from the polls on November 6.

In July, Wisconsin State Judge, David Flanagan blocked that state's restrictive voter ID law after testimony showing that 330,000 eligible Wisconsin voters do not have forms of ID required by the law. In 2004, Wisconsin had seven confirmed instances of voter fraud out of nearly three million votes cast. And in August, a Federal court blocked a Texas law, saying that it would impose "strict, unforgiving burdens" on poor minority voters, many of whom would have had to travel over 200 miles round trip to obtain the required ID.

While we are heartened by these recent voting rights victories, we remain concerned about the eventual implementation of these discriminatory laws, and whether they will be used to disenfranchise historically vulnerable citizens including seniors, people of color and young people. Realizing that a number of voter ID laws may be blocked before November 6, many supporters are now aiming to undermine the 2014 midterm elections and the presidential election of 2016. Pennsylvania Attorney General Tom Corbett says he still supports the blocked state law and Wisconsin Attorney General Van Hollen has said, "I will continue the battle to have the law upheld."

Make no mistake about it: Through our Occupy the Vote campaign and in collaboration with other grassroots voting rights efforts, the National Urban League will continue to oppose any effort to deny the right to vote to any eligible citizen, whether in a Presidential election year or any other.

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