



## HOW PHILLY WORKS

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PA'S NEW VOTER PHOTO ID LAW

Starting in November 2012, Pennsylvania will require all voters to present a photo ID every single time they go to the polls. There are also new rules about how to vote by absentee ballot.

*It's up to you to make sure you are not denied the right to vote!*

You can help yourself – and your family, friends and neighbors – by learning everything you can about the new law and helping to spread the word. *This dramatic change impacts all Pennsylvania voters.*

The Committee of Seventy and many groups and individuals all across Philadelphia are working together on a *non-partisan* campaign to educate voters about the new voter photo ID law and how to get an acceptable photo ID if they don't have one. (If you want to join us, please contact Dan Bright at [dbright@seventy.org](mailto:dbright@seventy.org) or 215-557-3600, ext. 124.)

Although you can vote without a photo ID for the April 24 primary (you will be asked for one, but can still go into the voting booth without it), you should know what the voter photo ID law says long before it goes into full effect for the November 6 general election. Getting a photo ID (if you don't have one) takes a few steps, and several weeks, so you'll want to start as soon as you can.

This installment of **HOW PHILLY WORKS** answers many (but not all) questions you might have about the new law. As we learn more, we will update this Q&A and post additional information on [www.seventy.org/voterID](http://www.seventy.org/voterID). We also hope you will call us with any voter ID questions you have by calling 1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683).

By the way, if one of your questions is why we are calling this **HOW PHILLY WORKS** when it's really about PA law, the answer is that it was too confusing to name it something else.

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#### Doesn't PA already require voters to present an ID at the polls?

Yes, but *only* if you are voting for the first time ever or voting for the first time in a new division (for example, when moving requires you to vote at a new polling place). And the current law allows you to identify yourself by showing photo or non-photo ID with your name and address (for example, a utility bill, paycheck or bank statement). The new law dramatically changes this by saying: (1) all voters must show an ID every time they vote, and (2) only a photo ID is acceptable.

#### When do I need to bring a photo ID to the polls?

Starting with the November 6 general election – and for all future elections. In other words, if you want to vote for president on November 6, you must present an acceptable photo ID.

### What types of photo IDs are acceptable in November?

Acceptable **PHOTO** IDs include:

- A **PA driver's license**: currently valid or expired less than 12 months.
- An **ID issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT)**: currently valid or expired less than 12 months.
- A currently valid **U.S. passport**. Expired passports will not be accepted.
- An **active duty or retired U.S. military ID, including an ID for members of the PA National Guard**: an indefinite expiration date will be accepted.
- A currently valid **military dependent's ID**. Expired IDs will not be accepted.
- A currently valid **employee ID** issued by federal, PA, PA county or PA municipal government. Expired IDs will not be accepted.
- A currently valid **ID issued by a PA university, college, seminary, community college or two-year college** to students, faculty, employees and alumni. Expired IDs will not be accepted.
- A currently valid **ID issued by a PA care facility** (such as a long-term care nursing facility, assisted living residence or a personal care home). Expired IDs will not be accepted.

### I have a religious objection to being photographed.

You can still vote by presenting a non-photo driver's license or other non-photo ID issued by PennDOT. Both IDs must have a definite expiration date. IDs beyond the expiration date will not be accepted.

### I don't have any of the photo IDs you mentioned.

You can apply for Photo ID to use for voting by going to a **PennDOT Driver's License Center** and submitting form [DL-54A](#) and signing an [Oath/ Affirmation](#) that you don't have any of the photo IDs that will be accepted at the polls. When completing the application, you will need to provide:

- Your Social Security card, **and**
- Your official birth certificate (with a raised seal), certificate of U.S. citizenship, certificate of naturalization or a valid U.S. passport, **and**
- Two proofs of residency, e.g., lease agreement, mortgage documents, W-2 form, tax records or a current utility bill (cell phone bills cannot be used).

### Do voters with expired driver's licenses or a non-driver's license photo ID have to go through this same process?

No, if a voter once had a PA driver's license or a non-driver's license photo ID, and these are now expired, in many cases, the voter does not have to bring in documentation (e.g., birth certificate, social security card, proof of residency) to get a photo ID for voting purposes (see F. above). The voter must only give his/her name at a PennDOT driver's license center and, once verified as being in the system, will be given a photo ID for voting purposes. The voters still must complete the application form and sign an oath/affirmation that he/she doesn't have an acceptable form of photo ID and need one in order to vote. Voters whose driver's licenses expired before 1990 can call PennDOT at 1-800-932-4600 to see if their information is still in the system.

### What if my name changed and doesn't "match" the name on some documents I'm showing PennDOT?

PennDOT recommends bringing documents that "connect" the names. For example, if you got married or divorced, it's a good idea to bring a marriage certificate or a divorce decree.

### **I live with my parents. Where am I going to get two proofs of residency?**

You can bring one of your parents with you to PennDOT to show their Pennsylvania driver's license or non-driver's photo ID. As a second proof of residency, you can bring a bank statement, paystub or a credit card bill as long as the address matches the address on your parent's ID. (But if you have a valid Pennsylvania driver's license, you don't need to do this – Just show your driver's license at the polls.)

### **I go to college in Philadelphia and live in a dorm. How do I prove my residency?**

Remember that you can use your college ID as long as it has your photo, a definite expiration date and is still current (not expired) on the day you vote. But if your college photo ID isn't acceptable, you need to go to PennDOT to get a photo ID. You can submit paperwork showing your dorm room assignment and a bill with your dorm room address as one proof of residency. A bank statement or paystub with your dorm address can serve as a second proof of residency.

### **What if my college Photo ID doesn't have an expiration date?**

Many Pennsylvania colleges, universities, seminaries, community colleges and two-year colleges give out photo IDs that include the date the ID was *issued*, not when it *expires*. To be acceptable at the polls, the photo ID must have a current expiration date -- which can be a specific date in the future (e.g., 9/16/16), a school year (e.g., 2012-2013) or a semester (e.g., Fall 2012). A sticker with this information affixed to a photo ID will be acceptable at the polls.

### **What if I go to a college or university out-of-state?**

Student IDs from *non-PA* colleges or universities are not acceptable forms of photo ID.

### **How much will it cost me to get a photo ID in order to vote?**

Nothing. **It's free.** (But getting a copy of your birth certificate with a raised seal will cost you \$10 if you were born in Pennsylvania or perhaps more if you were born in another state or country. The fee may be waived for voters who served or are currently serving in the Armed Forces or their dependents.)

### **Where can I find the nearest PennDOT Driver's License Center?**

Photo IDs for voting are not available at all PennDOT offices – just at PennDOT Driver's License Centers. Check here for a listing of Driver's License Centers around the state: <http://www.dot.state.pa.us/>

### **How can I get a PA birth certificate?**

Information on obtaining PA birth certificates is available by calling the PA Department of Health's Division of Vital Records at 724-656-3100 or by logging onto:

[http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/birth\\_certificates/14121](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/birth_certificates/14121). If you were born in another state, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w.htm>, to find out how to obtain your birth certificate.

### **I can't find my Social Security card? Where can I get a replacement?**

Details about replacing your Social Security card can be found by calling the federal Social Security Administration office at 1-800-772-1213 or by logging onto: [http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/251](http://ssa-custhelp.ssa.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/251). Unlike a PA birth certificate, a replacement Social Security card is free.

### **What happens if I can't afford to get a photo ID for some reason?**

If you come to the polls in November without a photo ID because you couldn't afford to get one (e.g., you couldn't pay \$10 for an official birth certificate), you will be allowed to vote by provisional (paper) ballot.

In order for your provisional ballot to count, you have *six calendar days after the election* to provide your county Board of Elections with an affirmation that states that you are the same person who cast the provisional ballot, and that you cannot afford to obtain proof of your identity. You can do this electronically, by mail, by fax – or you can show up in person at the Board of Elections.

### What happens if I have an acceptable photo ID but forget to bring it to the polls in November?

If you forget your photo ID, you will have to vote by provisional (paper) ballot. In order for your provisional ballot to count, you have *six calendar days after the election* to provide your county Board of Elections with a copy of an acceptable photo ID (in other words, an ID that would have been acceptable had you not forgotten to bring it to the polls) and an affirmation that you are the same person who cast the provisional ballot. You can do this electronically, by mail, by fax – or you can show up in person at the Board of Elections.

### And I if don't do this within six days?

Your provisional ballot won't be counted.

### Where can I find my county Board of Elections?

Click here for a listing of all county Boards of Election around the state: <http://www.votespa.com/>

### Do I need to show ID to vote by absentee ballot?

Unless you are a military or overseas voter applying for an absentee ballot, you must prove your identity by providing one of the following on your application for an absentee ballot:

- Your driver's license number, **or**
- The last four digits of your social security number (if you don't have a driver's license), **or**
- A copy of any photo ID that would be acceptable if you were voting in person, **or**
- A non-photo driver's license or other non-photo ID issued by PennDOT (if you have a religious objection to being photographed).

### What happens if my absentee ballot is rejected?

If you don't prove your identity properly, or your proof can't be verified by your county Board of Elections, you will get a notice from the Board (along with the absentee ballot) that you must provide acceptable proof or your absentee ballot won't count. You have *six calendar days after an election* to do this.

### I'm disabled. Voting is hard enough for me as it is.

If you are disabled and your polling place is not handicapped accessible, you are eligible to vote by alternative ballot. The new voter photo ID law doesn't require you to show proof of identification if you vote by alternative ballot.

### This is happening really fast. Isn't the primary around the corner?

Yes, on Tuesday, April 24. The April 24 primary is like a dress rehearsal. You will be asked for a photo ID but will still be allowed to vote on the machines without one. It's a good idea to bring a photo ID just to get in the habit of bringing it to the polls every time you vote.

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*The non-partisan Committee of Seventy wants to get more people thinking and talking about important issues affecting their everyday lives. That's why we regularly publish our **HOW PHILLY WORKS** series.*

*If you have thoughts or ideas for other topics, or have friends who might want to get our **HOW PHILLY WORKS** directly, please e-mail us at [futureofthecity@seventy.org](mailto:futureofthecity@seventy.org).*

In the meantime, visit [www.seventy.org/voterID](http://www.seventy.org/voterID) for complete information on Pennsylvania's new voter photo ID law and the 2012 elections. And, again, contact Dan Bright at [dbright@seventy.org](mailto:dbright@seventy.org) or 215-557-3600, ext. 124 to join the non-partisan education campaign to make sure that every city voter comes to the polls with an acceptable photo ID.