



Republican National Lawyers Association

P.O. Box 18965, Washington, D.C. 20036 • (703) 719-6335 tel• <http://www.rnla.org>

For Immediate Release
Thursday, September 8, 2011

Contact: Michael Thielen
(703) 719-6335

Getting the Complete Picture on Photo Voter ID

Washington, D.C. – Today, Senator Dick Durbin will chair a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing entitled “New State Voting Laws: Barriers to the Ballot?” A misleading press release on Senator Durbin’s website states that “The overwhelming evidence, however, indicates that voter impersonation fraud is virtually non-existent and these new laws will make it harder for hundreds of thousands of elderly, disabled, minority, young, rural, and low income Americans to exercise their right to vote.”¹

The evidence overwhelmingly contradicts Senator Durbin’s claims. Studies by the University of Missouri, The Heritage Foundation, University of Delaware and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, American University and John Lott found that voter ID does not decrease the turnout of voters and does not have a disparate impact on minority, poor, or elderly voters.²

The Rhode Island legislature, the vast majority which is composed of Democrats, passed a voter ID law this year. Rhode Island Democrat Senator Harold Metts who sponsored voter ID legislation in the state Senate said, “As a minority citizen and a senior citizen I would not support anything that I thought would present obstacles or limit protections.”³ Independent Governor Lincoln Chafee signed the Rhode Island voter ID bill into law and said, “Notably, I spoke with representatives of our state’s minority communities, and I found their concerns about voter fraud and their support for this bill particularly compelling.”⁴

In a poll conducted by Rasmussen, 75% of American voters believe photo identification should be required at the polls. 85% of Republicans, 77% of voters not affiliated with either major party, and 63% of Democrats support voter ID.⁵ The survey also found that support for voter ID is “high across virtually all demographic groups.”⁶

Michael Thielen, Executive Director of the Republican National Lawyers Association, said, “While liberals in Washington oppose voter ID, the overwhelming majority of Americans, including rank and file Democrats stand for this common sense policy. Mainstream voters recognize that voter ID is a pragmatic policy that ensures elections are fair, open and honest.”

###

¹ Durbin to Chair Hearing Examining New State Voting Laws That Threaten to Suppress Turnout Nationwide, Sept. 2, 2011, <http://durbin.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=16aa6ae3-91ad-4671-85fe-b901fccdcf24>.

² Hans von Spakovsky, *Voter Photo Identification: Protecting the Security of Elections*, HERITAGE MEMORANDUM, July 13, 2011, p. 4, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2011/07/Voter-Photo-Identification-Protecting-the-Security-of-Elections>.

³ Gov. Lincoln D. Chafee Signs Voter ID Legislation, July 6, 2011, <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/14229>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ 75% Support Showing Photo ID At The Polls, Rasmussen Reports, June 9, 2011, http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/general_politics/june_2011/75_support_showing_photo_id_at_the_polls.

⁶ *Id.*