

THE GREEN WIRE

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Doing the math on the voter photo ID bill

The intricacies of mathematics have always managed to elude me somewhat. I conquered addition and subtraction fairly easily, fractions a bit more slowly and algebra at a snail's pace. Geometry? Please. Trigonometry? I'm happy I can spell it. Still, I put on my math cap and decided to give a thorough examination to the numbers surrounding the voter photo ID bill which Republicans are attempting to maneuver through the Missouri Senate.

Let's start with the number 170,000. I know the Secretary of State says there are between 170,000 and 190,000 voter-age people in Missouri who have no photo ID but in the interests of judicious conservatism I'm going with 170,000.

OK, let's take another conservative 50 percent off the top of that number. I mean, I'm guessing half of these photo ID-less folks won't want one – they don't vote, don't drive, or fear that Martians will use their photos to control them. We're making headway, down to 85,000 potential voters who will need to be photographed.

If passed, SB 1014 would take effect August 28 since there is no emergency clause. There are exactly 70 days, not working days, but *days* between August 28 and Election Day Nov. 7. The bill calls for a single van to traverse the state, snapping photos of people who provide the right data. It is my understanding that the GOP in its great wisdom has decided to allow TWO vans to complete the task. Great. Each van would need to provide the necessary registration and photography to about 42,500 people. Ain't math fun?

So, with 70 days – assuming the vans are at work seven days a week, eight hours a day – and two vans, the state would have to nab about 607 people per day, per van. Eight hours into 607 people equals, let me see, 76 people per hour, per van. Gee whiz, that's better than one per minute. Won't checking the documentation take a little longer than that? I'm not sure the elderly or the disabled can even move that fast even if we had them all lined up and ready to be shot (with a camera).

Finally, let's not even consider that while Missouri Republicans want to increase requirements on voting, the feds have taken dead aim at terrorist activity and have a proposal in place which will make getting a driver's license harder to obtain effective in 2008. Not being a Chicken Little, I won't cry "Conspiracy!" But ... tougher to vote, tougher to get a driver's license ... hmmm.

Sometimes it is difficult; I dread the brainwork. But do the math on this proposal. It does not add up.