



## MISSOURI SENATE

JEFFERSON CITY

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**A Weekly Column for the  
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# Missouri Voter Protection Act

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JEFFERSON CITY – The Missouri Senate this week gave first-round approval to the Missouri Voter Protection Act, which is designed to protect the right of all Missourians to vote in fair and honest elections. Senate Bill 1014 needs a final vote to move to the House for consideration. The bill was filed in response to numerous problems at the polls during the 2000 and 2004 elections.

The legislation would improve Missouri's election process by protecting voters from intimidation at polling places, cracking down on election fraud, reforming the voter registration process, and extending provisional balloting to all ballot issues.

The Missouri Voter Protection Act says that anyone who harasses or intimidates a voter with the intent of preventing them from exercising their constitutional right to vote will be subject to criminal prosecution. The act also would make it a felony to use violence or knowingly provide false information to keep a Missourian from voting. The measure also expands the "no electioneering" perimeter at polling places from 25 feet to 50 feet to protect voters as they go to the polls.

In an effort to restore confidence in the election process, SB 1014 would require all voters to provide a photo identification before casting a ballot. More than 95-percent of Missourians of voting age already have an acceptable form of photo I.D., such as a driver's license. For those who don't, the state would provide one for free. The act calls for at least nine mobile units to be available to distribute non-driver's licenses for voting purposes. It also creates an elections quick response team to help voters locate or process any documents they need to fulfill the new voter ID requirements. The Secretary of State's office will establish a toll-free voter assistance number telling voters when and where they can acquire a free non-driver's license photo ID.

Additionally, voters born on or before January 1, 1941 will be allowed to cast a provisional ballot. The ballot will be counted if the voter's identity can be verified by comparing the individual's signature to the signature on file with the election authority. SB 1014 also requires provisional ballots to be processed before the election results are certified.

The legislation also brings accountability to the process of voter registration. SB 1014 would require voter registration solicitors to register with the Missouri Secretary of State. It also prohibits paying a "bounty" for voter registration forms. It's important to eliminate the incentive that has led to voter registrations submitted in the names of the deceased, dogs, and comic book characters.

In an effort to give our county clerks time to process these new voting procedures, the act contains a phase-in clause. For elections on or before November 1, 2008, voters who appear at their polling place without a proper ID can cast a provisional ballot after signing an affidavit verifying their identity and presenting certain forms of identification:

- Any state identification
- Federal identification
- An ID issued by an institution of higher education
- A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document containing the name and address of the voter
- A driver's license or state ID card from another state.

We must ensure that voters can trust that elections in Missouri are fair. The Missouri Voter Protection Act will help make it easy to vote, but tough to cheat.

If you have questions or comments about this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at 573-751-8793 or by e-mail at: [delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us](mailto:delbertscott@senate.state.mo.us)

*Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.*