

VOTER ID/CRAWFORD Talking Points

- We are disappointed by the Supreme Court ruling in *Crawford*, but the Court has also left open the door for future challenges in Indiana and elsewhere by eligible voters who are denied their right to vote based on burdensome voter ID laws.
- While voter ID laws may seem like no burden to those of us lucky enough to have a current driver's license, it's not hard to think about people all of us know who might find it a great barrier to the voting booth. What about a senior citizen, living on a fixed income, who no longer drives? A student, who is politically active, but happens to hold a driver's license in the state where he last lived, not where he's in school? Low-income urban residents, who rely on public transportation, or people displaced by natural disasters, like Hurricane Katrina? People who were orphaned as a child, and do not have access to their birth records? Women who are recently married and have not updated their licenses with their new name or new addresses?
- All of these people have every right to vote. They're your constituents. We should be passing laws that make it easier for people to go to the ballot box, not harder. We should pull down barriers, not create new bars to the polling place.
- And have you ever accidentally let your driver's license expire, just for a few days? How would you like it if you arrived at the polling place with just a few minutes carved out of your busy day to cast a ballot, and you find yourself turned away because your license was expired?
- **We must not act in haste in enacting these unnecessary provisions that will greatly affect the people that you serve.** Voter ID creates barriers to the polls, ultimately paving the way for eligible voters to be left out of the process – and even one eligible person being left out of the process is unacceptable.
- **Requiring every voter to show additional ID has few benefits and many downsides.**
 - ❖ **No matter how you slice this, the cost of new ID requirements will amount to a modern-day poll tax for many of our citizens.** Saying that an ID is free is misleading. Many will be forced to spend money and time away from work to obtain the documents necessary for the ID, such as a birth certificate and will have to spend time away from work to obtain the ID. For senior citizens, people who were orphaned as children, Katrina victims, and many others, this is a major hurdle that will create an additional barrier to the ballot box. In fact, a dissenting opinion written by Justice David Souter noted that these burdens are “uncomfortably close” to the poll tax of \$1.50 that the Supreme Court overturned 42 years ago.
 - ❖ **The potential for poll worker confusion and selective enforcement of the rules are great – especially because there’s a long, recent history of both.** In most instances, poll workers aren’t trained well enough in advance to fully grasp

the nuances involved here – which IDs are acceptable, who should be asked for their IDs, and protocol for attending to people who don't have the proper ID, such as giving them a provisional ballot. Ultimately, this results in racial profiling at the polling place.

- ❖ **Provisional ballots have been suggested as a compromise or workable solution, since theoretically, voters can still cast a ballot. They are only helpful when they are counted, and too many times they aren't.** In primary after primary, we have seen poll workers give out provisional ballots, when voters should be allowed to vote regularly, or be allowed to use an emergency paper ballot. They are one of the major failures of our current election administration system. In Justice Souter's dissent, he highlights the fact that out of 34 aspiring voters who used a provisional ballot in the 2007 municipal elections in one Indiana county, only two voters showed up within 10 days to follow up with the necessary documents to the County Clerk's office. This isn't a compromise or a solution, it's a burden.
- Some would have us believe that this is an answer to in-person voter fraud. What nonsense. There is very little evidence of in-person voter fraud. The problem in this country is not people trying to vote who shouldn't -- it's all the people who can vote, but don't. Many people don't vote because of rules like this, that make it too complicated, hard and costly for them to go to the polls. We should be passing laws that make it easier to vote, not harder.
- **If we've learned anything from these primary elections, it is that even though people are eager to cast a vote in this historic election, they're not voting twice and dead people aren't trying to cast a ballot.** And there has been record turnout in these elections across the country – shattering previously held primary turnout numbers. Doubling, tripling, and even quadrupling those records. That's a great thing for this nation. And despite this wave of interest, supporters of this law in Indiana and around the country cannot point to any significant instances of in-person voter-impersonation fraud. That's because in-person voter fraud is not a problem.
- **This isn't about fraud. This is about partisan political interest. Some legislators would rather further their own political interests than do what is best for all voters by ensuring that everyone has equal access to the ballot box.** Voter ID helps Republican candidates, no question. These laws mostly affect students, minorities, the poor, and the elderly -- groups that tend to vote with Democrats. Why else do you think Republicans have pushed these laws so hard?
- **Voter ID is part of a disgraceful, relentless pursuit by some Republican lawmakers to keep voters from the ballot box and we should do everything we can to stop them in their tracks.**