



PO. Box 29816
Lincoln NE, 68529
(402) 982-1572
lwwnebraska.org

Feb. 1, 2023

Senator Tom Brewer, Chair,
and Members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee
State Capitol, Lincoln NE

RE: LB535 (Slama) – Require valid photographic identification and change provisions relating to voting under the Election Act and certain identification documents

OPPOSE: *Please include this position statement from the League of Women Voters of Nebraska as part of the public hearing record for LB535.*

Dear Senator Brewer and Members of the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee:

The League of Women Voters has, since 2007, opposed state legislation that requires a photo identification document in order to vote. Following the November 2022 passage of the Voter ID ballot initiative (432), the League of Women Voters of Nebraska has identified elements that will guide our advocacy on Voter ID and meet the requirements of the Nebraska Constitution.

The Nebraska State Constitution, Article I-22, states: *“All elections shall be free; and there shall be no hindrance or impediment to the right of a qualified voter to exercise the elective franchise.”*

Two thirds of states now require voter identification to be presented to cast a ballot. Of these, 18 require a photo ID to be presented prior to casting a ballot. The degree of strictness associated with the identification documents varies by state.

In November 2022, 55% of Nebraska’s eligible voters participated in the general election. Of those, 65% voted for Initiative 432, requiring the Legislature to enact provisions for voters to present a photo ID to vote. This figure represents one-third of Nebraska’s eligible voters – 432,000 of the 1.2 million registered. Although there is no history of voter fraud in Nebraska, advocates for Initiative 432 supported the photo identification requirement as a measure to prevent any future potential problems.

Although the League of Women Voters of Nebraska opposed the implementation of a voter photo ID policy, we recognize the support for Initiative 432. We will advocate for legislation that serves to mitigate barriers and make voting as accessible as possible for all eligible voters. The following should be included in such legislation:

- Acceptance of a wide range of photo identification documents;
- Issuance of acceptable documents at no cost to the voter;
- Preservation of mail-in ballot accessibility by exempting mail-in ballots for the photo ID requirement;

- Protection of election day voting for individuals who do not have a photo ID on their person;
- Funding a public awareness and education campaign; and
- Training of election officials and county clerks, including poll workers.

The above criteria are not met in LB535 as currently written. We are aware that additional voter identification bills have been introduced and have not yet been scheduled for hearing.

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska urges the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee not to advance LB535.

Sincerely,

Sheri St. Clair, Government Co-Director, LWVNE
MaryLee Moulton, President, LWVNE