

ACLU of Michigan Legislative Docket: Voting Rights

The ACLU is supportive of legislation that ensures that the election process is accessible and efficient for anyone wishing to participate in the election process. Bills that expand access to voting by allowing greater latitude regarding requirements for absentee voting or loosening address and voter identification requirements are important tools that protect the fundamental right to vote.

The ACLU maintains a presence in Lansing that enables us to pass policies that expand civil liberties or prevent the passage of policies that are hostile to civil liberties. Through traditional lobbying techniques lobbying, advocacy, and advocacy the legislative program seeks to advance and protect our civil liberties.

The ACLU of Michigan's legislative program works on a breadth of issues. To give you an idea of what we've been up to, we have provided a brief summary, our position on the issue and where the bill is currently situation in the legislative process. We have stated our position on each bill using brief descriptors:

- **Actively Support/ Oppose:** *The ACLU considers this bill high priority and has taken direct action to support or opposing the bill. The bill has, more likely than not, seen movement in the Legislature during the current session.*
- **Support/Oppose:** *Based on its own policies, the ACLU supports or opposes the bill but has not taken an affirmative action OR the legislation has not moved through the legislature and therefore the ACLU has not needed to take direct action at this point.*
- **Remain Neutral:** *As written, the bill does include some civil liberties issues but the ACLU has taken no direct action to support or oppose the legislation.*

Petition Signatures

[House Bill 5152](#)

Sponsor: Rep. Lisa Posthumus Lyons (R-Alto)

ACLU Position: **Actively Support**

Status: Enrolled, March 3, 2014

Also see First Amendment

This law repealed an unconstitutional state law that prohibited out-of-state residents from collecting petition signatures in Michigan.

No Reason Absentee Voting

[House Bill 4058](#), [House Bill 4252](#), [House Bill 5253](#), [Senate Bill 124](#)

Sponsor: Rep. Jeff Irwin (D-Ann Arbor), Rep. Marilyn Lane (D-Fraser), Rep. George T. Darany (D-Dearborn), Sen. Steve Bieda (D – Warren)

ACLU Position: **Support**

Status: House bills referred to House Committee on Elections and Ethics, Senate bill referred to Senate Committee on Local Government and Elections

These bills would eliminate the state’s current requirements for a voter to be eligible to vote by absentee ballot and instead allow a voter to apply for an absentee ballot with no justification. Currently, in Michigan, you may only obtain an absentee ballot if you are: age 60 years old or older; unable to vote without assistance at the polls; expecting to be out of town on election day; in jail awaiting arraignment or trial; unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons; appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of your precinct of residence. No reason absentee voting laws expand access to voting. Additionally, no-reason absentee voting will reduce congestion and long lines for those who prefer voting in person.

Electronic Submission of Voter Data

[Senate Bill 28](#)

Sponsor: Sen. Steve Bieda (D – Warren)

ACLU Position: **Support**

Status: Referred to Senate Committee on Local Government and Elections

This law would allow for the electronic submission of voter registration data.

Preregistration to Vote at age 16

[Senate Bill 260](#)

Sponsor: Sen. Steve Bieda (D – Warren)

ACLU Position: **Support**

Status: Referred to Senate Committee on Local Government and Elections

This law would allow and individuals between the ages of 16 and 17 ½ to preregister to vote. This will make voter registration more efficient.

Voter Registration Address Requirements

Senate Bill 419

Sponsor: Sen. Rebekah Warren (D-Ann Arbor)

ACLU Position: **Supportive**

Status: Referred to Senate Committee on Local Government and Elections

This law would allow an individual to change the residence address on his or her operator's or chauffer's license without changing his or her address for purposes of the qualified voter file. The law would also allow an individual to change his or her address for purposes of the qualified voter file without changing the residence address on his or her operator's or chauffer's license. Current law states that a person's driver's license address and voter registration address be the same.

The current law primarily affects college students. Because of their frequent moves within the collective community, students generally maintain a fixed driver's license address at their family home. This law will require students to either frequently change their license address or maintain their license address at the family home. This means that they will have to return to their family home on elections dates or vote by absentee ballot. Absentee ballots are more difficult and time-consuming, and will discourage students from voting in their college communities.

Voter Registration Address Requirements

Senate Bill 420

Sponsor: Sen. Rebekah Warren (D-Ann Arbor)

ACLU Position: **Supportive**

Status: Referred to Senate Committee on Local Government and Elections

This law will remove the requirement that the same address be used for voter registration and driver license purposes. Current law states that a person's driver's license address and voter registration address must be the same. The current law primarily affects college students. Because of their frequent moves within the collective community, students generally maintain a fixed driver's license address at their family home. This law will require students to either frequently change their license address or maintain their license address at the family home. This means that they will have to return to their family home on elections dates or vote by absentee ballot. Absentee ballots are more difficult and time-consuming, and will discourage students from voting in their college communities.

Absent Voter Qualification

Senate Bill 421

Sponsor: Sen. Rebekah Warren (D-Ann Arbor)

ACLU Position: **Support**

Status: Referred to Senate Committee on Local Government and Elections

This law would allow first-time voters to cast absentee ballots. Currently, there are barriers in place that make it difficult for first-time voters to cast absentee ballots. This law will remove those barriers in order to expand access to voting.

Eligible State Identification for Voting Purposes

Senate Bill 467

Sponsor: Sen. Jim Ananich (D-Flint)

ACLU Position: **Support**

Status: Referred to Senate Committee on Local Government and Elections

This law would allow registered electors wishing to vote to identify himself or herself with a generally recognized picture identification card in lieu of a state identification card or operator's or chauffeur's license. Expands access to voting.

Early Voting

House Bill 4103

Sponsor: Rep. Woodrow Stanley (D-Flint)

ACLU Position: **Support**

Status: Referred to House Committee on Elections and Ethics

This law will expand early voting to 8am-8pm each weekday and 10a,-4pm each Saturday and Sunday during early voting periods, which will begin 30 days before election day. This law will expand access to voting and will reduce congestion and long lines for those who prefer voting in person on election day.

Pictures in Polling Places

[HB 4477](#)

Sponsor: Rep. Andy Schor (D-Lansing)

ACLU Position: **Support**

Status: Referred to House Committee on Elections and Ethics

This law would allow a voter to use a camera in a polling place to take a photograph of himself or herself. The law would not allow a voter to take a picture in a polling booth/voter compartment or to take a picture of his or her ballot.

Eligible State Identification for Voting Purposes

[House Bill 4938](#)

Sponsor: Rep. David Knezek (D-Dearborn Heights)

ACLU Position: **Support**

Status: Referred to House Committee on Elections and Ethics

This legislation allows registered electors wishing to vote to identify himself or herself with a generally recognized picture identification card in lieu of a state identification card or operator's or chauffeur's license. This law will make voting in-person more efficient.

Voting Rights Vote Counts

Petition Signatures [House Bill 5152 – Supports](#)

[Unanimous House Vote in Favor](#)

[Senate Vote](#)

Yeas—34

Anderson	Gregory	Kahn	Proos
Bieda	Hansen	Kowall	Richardville
Booher	Hildenbrand	Marleau	Robertson
Brandenburg	Hood	Meekhof	Rocca
Casperson	Hopgood	Moolenaar	Schuitmaker
Caswell	Hune	Nofs	Walker
Colbeck	Hunter	Pappageorge	Whitmer

Emmons
Green

Johnson
Jones

Pavlov

Young

Nays—3

Ananich

Smith

Warren

Excused—1

Jansen