



To: Members of Congress and State Legislators

From: Jason Snead, Executive Director

Date: 18 August 2021

Re: New Polling: Bipartisan support for photo ID laws and voting safeguards grows

The American public continues to back election reforms that make it easy to vote *and* hard to cheat. According to a new HEP Action (HEPA) poll¹, **81% of voters back laws requiring every voter to show a photo ID when they vote.** In fact, despite six months of concerted effort by progressives to turn public opinion away from voter ID and other election safeguards, public support for photo ID laws is *higher* today than it was when HEPA asked voters the same question in March. **In fact, support for photo ID laws among Democrats rose by 4 points, Independents by 7 points, and support among Black voters rose 13 points.**

The public consensus on voting reform stands in stark contrast to the renewed progressive demands for Congress to eliminate safeguards like voter ID laws and protections for mail-in ballots nationwide. Only 22% of voters want to eliminate ballot protections; 64% want election reform to focus on building confidence by adding safeguards to elections. The left's signature legislation, the "For the People Act" (HR 1) and the "John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act" (HR 4), both embrace policies that bipartisan majorities of Americans reject. Meanwhile, 56% of voters worry that progressives' strategy to build support for them with hyperbolic claims of "Jim Crow" voter suppression are leading voters to doubt the legitimacy of future elections.

For most people, it's about making it easy to vote *and* hard to cheat.

When asked to choose between the "conservative" and "progressive" visions for election reform—preserving election credibility through stronger safeguards or making voting "easier" by eliminating them—most voters (65%) continue to back the conservative position. Black voter support for stronger safeguards is up since March, from 51% to 57%. Support among independents has increased from 61% to 69%.

Only 22% of respondents want to make voting "easier" by getting rid of safeguards like voter ID laws and absentee ballot protections. This position defines progressive voting reforms like HR1, but it remains underwater with every racial, age, income, and ideological group tested.

For most people, the right to vote is about more than just access; 85% of voters think a fair process that guards against fraud is equally important. Three-fourths of voters (76%) recognize that fraud disenfranchises people and casts doubt on the legitimacy of the democratic process, and 76% do not believe the nation should wait for it to become widespread to take the risk seriously.

Public support for photo ID laws is overwhelming and growing, despite unprecedented efforts to malign these laws as discriminatory.

Americans continue to decisively embrace photo ID requirements when voting, even as HR1 would expressly eliminate them, and HR4 would let the federal government overrule them. Despite an unprecedented progressive effort to malign ID laws, public support has *grown* from an already

¹ Online survey among 1,200 registered voters nationwide conducted July 8 – 17, 2021. Respondents were selected randomly from opt-in panel participants. Sampling controls were used to ensure that a proportional and representative number of respondents were interviewed from such demographic groups as age, gender, race, and geographic region. Gender breakdown: 48% men—52% women. The survey included 1200-responder oversamples of Independents and Republicans. ±2.83% overall margin of error at the 95% confidence interval for overall survey. M.O.E.s for subgroups are larger.

overwhelming 77% in March, to 81% today. Voters reject the argument that showing an ID to vote is a “burden” (72%).

Most striking is the sustained support for photo ID requirements among voters whom progressives insist are being deliberately disenfranchised by them. Some 77% of Black voters, 78% of Hispanic voters, and 81% of lower-income voters believe voters should have to show a photo ID to vote. Black voter support for photo ID laws is up 13 points since the March survey. Strong majorities of Republicans (97%), Independents (82%), and Democrats (67%) favor photo ID laws, and support has risen in all three categories since March.

Americans support providing free photo IDs, not eliminating photo ID requirements when voting.

One common objection to photo ID laws is that some voters lack them. Only 12% of respondents support eliminating voter ID laws on that basis; 74% prefer preserving identification requirements while ensuring that voters have opportunities to get free IDs if they need them. Every state with a voter ID law offers voters the chance to get one for free, and the existence of a free ID makes 43% of voter ID opponents more likely to favor these laws. With better education and greater awareness of these programs, public support for ID laws may climb even higher.

Voters want identification requirements for mail-in ballots, too.

This year, states like Georgia and Florida have adopted new laws bringing photo ID requirements to absentee voting. Liberal activists and politicians attacked lawmakers for taking this step, yet almost three-quarters (71%) of respondents back these policies. Absentee ID laws are broadly supported by Black (70% vs. 21%), Hispanic (73% vs. 19%), and lower-income voters (72% vs. 19%), and overall support for absentee ID has grown since March (66%). Some 77% of respondents reported it would be easy to comply with an ID law that required a voter to hand write an ID number or a portion of their social security number—the mechanism chosen by states like Georgia, Florida, and Texas. Support for absentee ID laws has the strong potential to continue to grow.

The public wants meaningful protections for mail-in ballots, including bans on vote trafficking.

Americans understand that voting by mail is the most vulnerable way to cast a ballot. Only 6% of voters back keeping or expanding absentee voting without safeguards to protect their security and the credibility of elections. Four-fifths of voters (80%) think that mail voting needs safeguards.

Only 13% of voters think that political operatives should be able to collect voters’ ballots, a tactic known as vote trafficking. Nearly two-thirds (61%) think it should be illegal. Progressives claim that vote trafficking is necessary to aid poor and minority voters, yet only 10% of low-income voters, nine percent of Hispanics, and 18% of Black voters back it. HR1 would legalize vote trafficking nationwide, overruling the wishes of most voters and laws that ban or limit it in roughly half the states.

Americans do not want COVID policies to be the new normal for elections.

Many states temporarily changed voting laws and relaxed safeguards during the pandemic, or had changes forced on them through partisan litigation. Voters want to return to pre-pandemic voting standards, but progressives argue that doing so is actually “voter suppression.” The U.S. Department of Justice based part of its lawsuit against Georgia on this issue and has implied it will sue other states should they roll back pandemic responses.

Only 17% of voters want COVID policies to persist after the pandemic ends. Some 69% of the public want voting to return to pre-COVID standards, including 55% of Democrats and 66% of Independents, 60% of Black and 72% of Hispanic voters, and 54% of people for Joe Biden in 2020.