



Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness

Empowering Communities, Ending Homelessness

Dear Senator,

The Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness represents the service providers, shelters, local agencies and others working directly with individuals experiencing homelessness in Michigan. Today, we write to you to share our opposition to HBs 6066-6068, which passed the House last week. These bills would require a photo ID to vote in Michigan, something that may seem easy but can be very difficult for some of our most vulnerable citizens.

In 2015, there were 62,447 adults of voting age who were homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless across the state. Being homeless doesn't take away a person's constitutional right to vote, but it does create additional barriers to exercising that vote. Before the Senate takes action on this proposed legislation, we'd like to bring some things to your attention.

- Many individuals experiencing homelessness do not have a valid photo ID and can't attain one because of prohibitive fees, additional costs such as transportation to get to state offices and childcare for the time spent away from family, or lack of access to required documentation such as birth certificates.
- HBs 6067-6068 provide language to the effect of granting fee waivers and affidavits for individuals seeking proper documentation to obtain an ID, but we are concerned about the lack of guidance, specific process or financial guarantee to make this provision an appropriate means for many needing this assistance. Further, we stress the need for further dialogue and input from necessary stakeholders, such as our clerks and others working within these offices.
- Our current interpretation of HB 6066, based off of the Indiana legislation it is modeled on, is that those seeking an ID under this legislation will be issued a new form of identification strictly for voting purposes. This creates an unknown level of complication and costs without meeting the broader needs of individuals seeking valid IDs.
- Currently, a person who registers to vote in-person does not have to show a photo ID. "If you hand-deliver your application, the staff person helping you will take your form and ask you to provide photo identification. If you do not have an acceptable form of photo identification, you will be asked to sign an *Affidavit of Voter not in Possession of Picture Identification*." - Secretary of State, <http://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,4670,7-127-29836-182656--F,00.html>.
- Documented cases of voter fraud appear to be negligible in recent Michigan history. We question not only the need but the implied urgency to pass legislation that is purporting to solve a problem that is stated as fact yet has no supporting data.

Please consider these issues and the true needs of Michigan's entire population. We would be happy to speak with you further about this matter and answer any additional questions you may have.

The friends, allies and supporters of Michigan's homeless citizens,

Eric Hufnagel

MCAH Executive Director