



June 27, 2006

The Honorable Juanita Millender-McDonald
Ranking Member
House Administration Committee
1309 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representative Millender-McDonald:

AARP submits this letter for the record of your Committee hearing on June 22, 2006, regarding voter ID requirements for elections. AARP has a longstanding commitment to full citizen participation in the democratic process at the federal, state and local level, and for that reason AARP has supported electoral reform at the federal level -- i.e., enactment of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA), and reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act (VRA). AARP also conducts extensive voter education efforts in each of the 53 U.S. states and territories in which it has offices.

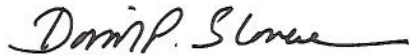
In addition, AARP attorneys represent U.S. citizens aged 50+ who are in danger of disenfranchisement at the federal or state level, and AARP has participated in various advisory capacities to support citizen empowerment through meaningful opportunity to exercise the franchise.

AARP attorneys are currently serving as one of the counsel for plaintiffs in lawsuits challenging burdensome and unreasonable state laws in Georgia (GA) and Arizona (AZ). These laws will, in effect, limit rather than expand citizen participation in the electoral process through unnecessarily restrictive requirements. In these jurisdictions, state legislatures or ballot initiatives have sought to enact laws that have elevated proof requirements for voters to register (AZ) and to vote in person (GA and AZ). These laws are based on assertions of a threat of fraud which lack concrete basis in fact and unfortunately serve to heighten tensions among voters divided by race, language and ethnicity. These new state laws and implementing rules will significantly limit opportunities to register and/or vote. Many persons who are qualified to vote but do not have ready access to documents -- such as birth certificates, driver's licenses and passports -- that never have been deemed necessary in the past may lose the fundamental right to vote.

AARP is particularly concerned that such rules will prevent many eligible older voters, voters with disabilities (who may be unable to obtain the requisite photo or citizenship ID) and low income voters (who may not be able to afford such ID) from exercising their right to vote. For example, an estimated 675,000 registered voters in GA have no driver's license, according to Georgia's Secretary of State. Such laws adversely affect older voters who (1) no longer drive and do not need licenses; (2) do not now travel or never did and therefore have no passport; or (3) are persons without birth certificates (e.g., Southern blacks or some Native Americans who

were not allowed in white hospitals that provided documentation). At a time when democratic elections are being conducted for the first time in many nations throughout the world, any unnecessary erosion in access to the ballot in the world's oldest electoral democracy should be unacceptable. On behalf of older Americans who have largely shaped the values of our democracy, we urge great care to ensure that the basic right to vote is not trampled in an effort to address unproven allegations of voting abuse.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David P. Sloane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

David P. Sloane
Senior Managing Director
Government Relations and Advocacy