



STATE OF DELAWARE
STATE COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
MARGARET M. O'NEILL BUILDING
410 FEDERAL STREET, SUITE 1
DOVER, DE 19901

VOICE: (302) 739-3620
TTY/TDD: (302) 739-3699
FAX: (302) 739-6704

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 30, 2013

TO: All Members of the Delaware State Senate
and House of Representatives

FROM: Ms. Daniese McMullin-Powell, Chairperson
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

RE: H.B. 105 [Election Day Voter Registration]

The State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) has reviewed H.B. 105 which would make Delaware the 12th state to allow Election Day registration. Background is contained in the attached excerpt from the May 3, 2013 Delaware House of Representatives e-Newsletter. A prospective voter could register by completing an application accompanied by a government issued photo identification or other document (e.g. bank statement; utility bill). Detractors of the legislation cite increased risk of voter fraud. Proponents cite facilitation of voting.

Given the prevalence of studies showing that voter fraud is rare, and the advantages of Election Day registration to individuals with disabilities, SCPD endorses the proposed legislation.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact SCPD if you have any questions regarding our position or observations on the proposed legislation.

cc: Ms. Elaine Manlove
The Honorable Jack Markell
Mr. Brian Hartman, Esq.
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens
Developmental Disabilities Council

hb 105 election day voter registration 5-30-13

May 3, 2013
 DE House of Rep
 e-Newsletter

Voting Proposals Unveiled

Delaware would become the 12th state to allow Election Day registration if a bill sponsored by a leading House Democrat becomes law.

House Bill 105, sponsored by House Majority Whip Rep. John Viola, D-Newark, would allow eligible residents to register to vote and cast their ballots on Election Day.

Currently, Delaware citizens must register to vote well before the day of the election.

Under the measure, a person would be able to register to vote at his or her polling place on the day of a presidential or state primary or general or special election by showing a valid government-issued photo identification card, current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck or other government document displaying the name and address of the person registering to vote – the same criteria required for a person registering to vote under existing Delaware law.

However, critics of same-day registration have noted that it can increase costs, overburden poll workers and create delays at polling places that discourage voting.

Neighboring Maryland has also been considering enacting same-day registration. In that state, Election Integrity Maryland (EIM), a non-partisan, non-profit citizen initiative dedicated to fair elections, criticized the proposal. "Proponents of this legislation may scoff at the issue of voter fraud, but they're taking a dangerously narrow view of the problem," said EIM President Cathy Kelleher. "Roughly 75 percent of Americans register great concern for election integrity. ... Minnesota, a same-day registration state, leads the country in cases of voter fraud."

Gov. Jack Markell supports same-day registration and has unveiled a complementary package of administration initiatives to expand the state's e-Signature system and make it possible for citizens to register to vote online.

Delaware voters can currently fill out a voter registration form online, but they must print and submit the form by mail or deliver it to an elections office. Delaware's new online registration system will enable citizens to complete the registration process via the Internet.

House Minority Leader Dan Short, R-Seaford, sounded a note of caution regarding the proposals. "Our caucus members share the opinion that government should encourage eligible citizens to take part in the democratic process, while ensuring that such policies maintain the integrity of the system," he said. "Currently, 39 states do not allow Election Day voter registration and 34 states have not approved online voter registration. Delaware needs to take great care before making any changes in its electoral system that could potentially

undermine the public's faith in the process. We look forward to discussing the aspects of both proposals as they work their way through the legislature."