

Disability Rights Nebraska

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

April 2, 2018

Dear Senators:

Disability Rights Nebraska, the designated Protection and Advocacy organization for people with disabilities in Nebraska, writes in opposition to LB 1066.

LB 1066 represents a solution in search of a problem. Voter impersonation is a very rare phenomenon: a review of general, primary, special, and municipal elections from 2000 through 2014 reveals only 31 incidents of voter impersonation in over 1 billion ballots cast.¹

Additionally, many people with disabilities do not have the appropriate identification. Even when the identification is offered free of charge, there are other ancillary expenses that accrue in order to obtain documents used to establish identity, e.g., a birth certificate. Furthermore, the burden and cost of travel is prohibitive for many people with disabilities. Given the significant difficulties people with disabilities face with public transportation (especially in the more rural areas of our state), even obtaining a free identification from the Secretary of State's office is a significant burden.

A Rutgers University study reports that Nebraska has the highest voter participation rate among persons with disabilities in the country, at more than 70 percent.²

We fear that LB 1066 would decrease voter turnout by people with disabilities and as such we strongly urge the legislature to table this legislation.

¹ Justin Levitt, "A Comprehensive Investigation of Voter Impersonation Finds 31 Credible Incidents Out of One Billion Ballots Cast," Washington Post, August 6, 2014, available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2014/08/06/a-comprehensive-investigation-of-voter-impersonation-finds-31-credibleincidents-out-of-one-billion-ballots-cast/>.

² Matt Vasilogambros, "How Voters With Disabilities Are Blocked From the Ballot Box", Stateline, February 1, 2018, available at <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2018/02/01/how-voters-with-disabilities-are-blocked-from-the-ballot-box>

For further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at your convenience: brad@drne.org, or 402-474-3183.

Sincerely,

Brad Meurrens

Public Policy Director
Disability Rights Nebraska