

January 14, 2014

Judge Eric L. Lipman
Office of Administrative Hearings
600 North Robert St.
P.O. Box 64620
St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0620

RE: Proposed Amendment to Permanent Rules Relating to Elections

Dear Judge Lipman:

Election Day registration is one of the main reasons our state has a high voter turnout but we should continue to strive to improve that turnout. I have worked as head election judge for the city of North Oaks for over 10 years and have had extensive experience with Election Day registration. I have had instances when citizens in my community who meet all voting requirements have had difficulty registering to vote on Election Day because they did not possess one of the acceptable documents. These are often people who are new to the community or new to the state of Minnesota and it is disappointing to them and me when they are turned away from the polls on Election Day.

In that spirit I believe the list of acceptable documents for proof of identity and address for Election Day registration should be expanded. I have had voters who recently moved to Minnesota come to my precinct and because of job and family responsibilities had not obtained a Minnesota license or state ID prior to Election Day. Often these citizens have a driver's license or a state ID from another state. It seems reasonable that these should be allowed as proof of identity. In all of our states, a driver's license or a state ID is used to prove identity for a variety of purposes so I feel it is reasonable to accept it as proof of identity for Election Day registration. To prove their address they should be allowed to use a credit card or banking statement with their current address. A mortgage statement with their current address should also be allowed for proof of address.

The low voter turnout of young people concerns me also. We should be sensitive to their situation and encourage them to become civic minded citizens. Not all high school students drive nor do they have a state ID card. For some it is because of the cost of obtaining these documents. Students attending a Minnesota high school are given a photo ID by the high school at no cost to the student. The list of acceptable documents for Election Day registration should include an identification card issued by a Minnesota high school to prove identity.

I feel very frustrated when I have to tell a citizen who lives in my community that they will not be allowed to vote just because they do not have one or more documents from a small list of acceptable ones. These are people who satisfy all voting requirements and have a right to vote. Our state rules and regulations should facilitate that right.

Sincerely,

Kathy Tomsich

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North Oaks, MN 55127