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www.lwvok.org

Contact: Gloria Caldwell

918.747.8172

caldwell29@aol.com

VOTER ID BILL NOT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Tulsa, OK – “The League of Women Voters of Oklahoma (LWVOK) opposes legislation requiring voters to present identification each time they go to the polls,” said Gloria Caldwell, League spokesperson. “Senate Bill 4, introduced by Senator John Ford, will make a government-issued Voter ID a requirement at the polling place. We strongly urge Governor Henry to veto this legislation.”

“If there were any evidence of voter impersonation in Oklahoma elections, the League of Women Voters would be first in line supporting this kind of legislation – but proponents cannot identify one single case of voter impersonation in Oklahoma elections,” added Caldwell. “Election boards have stringent protections in place to preserve the integrity of Oklahoma’s election system.”

“The League opposes this legislation for several fundamental reasons,” Caldwell stated. “Senate Bill 4 will effectively disenfranchise thousands of Oklahoma voters. Voters will be standing in line much longer and it will create a heavy burden on precinct officials to inspect voter identification, match it to the register and process numerous provisional ballots.”

“The cost of administering such a Voter ID requirement is projected to cost about \$1 million a year,” said Caldwell. “It is an irresponsible expenditure on an unnecessary program at a time of serious recession and cut backs in school funding, medical services and other critical needs. Oklahoma already has a voter identification process at the polls and does not need to spend critical public funds to address a problem that doesn’t exist – voter impersonation at the polls.”

“Voting is the most fundamental expression of citizenship,” said Mary G. Wilson, national President of the League of Women Voters. “Breaking down barriers to citizen voter participation - from literacy tests to the poll tax - has been a constant battle for those of us who believe that every citizen should be able to exercise their right to vote, I urge Governor Henry to veto Senate Bill 4, legislation that would turn back the clock and erect unnecessary barriers to voter participation.”

“The League strongly objects to imposing an unnecessary barrier to voting,” added Caldwell. “There are numerous valid reasons why certain populations of Oklahomans – elderly, low income, disabled and minority - can’t easily obtain an ID. There are an estimated 78,000 eligible voters in Oklahoma who would be deprived of their right to vote under this legislation. The League has stood up against such hurdles to voting for nearly 90 years and that is why we are asking Governor Henry to stand with us in opposing this legislation.”

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.