

Shelby County Election Commission

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DEE NOLLNER
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News Release

(901) 545-2600
FAX (901) 545-3676

RICHARD L. HOLDEN
Administrator of Elections

JOE WM. YOUNG, II
*Deputy Administrator
of Elections*

A new law that will require voters to show a valid photo ID at the polls won't go into effect until next year, but in preparation for this new requirement, the Shelby County Election Commission will hold a town hall meeting to inform the public of the change in the law.

The meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. Tuesday, November 1, 2011 at the Shelby County Commission Chambers. The purpose of the meeting is to present information regarding the new law, which goes into effect January 1, 2012. The town hall meeting will include a presentation, followed by a question and answer period.

The major points of the law include:

- A voter is required to produce a federal or state government-issued photo ID before being allowed to vote. Some examples of a valid photo ID, even if expired, are a Tennessee driver license, U.S. passport, Department of Safety photo ID card, state or federal employee photo identification card, or a U.S. military photo ID. Student college IDs will not be accepted for voting purposes.

Free photo IDs may be obtained from any Department of Safety driver license testing station. Registered voters must sign an affidavit stating that the photo ID is for voting purposes, that they are a registered voter, and that they do not have any other valid government-issued photo ID. The Department of Safety will not issue a free photo ID if the person already has a valid government-issued photo ID

- Voters who are unable to produce a valid photo ID will be allowed to vote a provisional ballot, which is a paper ballot, at the polls. Voters casting a provisional ballot will have until two (2) business days after Election Day to return to the election commission office to show a valid photo ID.
- Voters with a religious objection to being photographed, or voters who are indigent and unable to obtain a photo ID without paying a fee - for example, the voter cannot pay for a birth certificate for proof of citizenship - may sign an oath affirming to the information and will be allowed to vote on the machines.
- Voters who vote absentee by mail, voters who are hospitalized, and voters who live in licensed nursing homes or assisted living centers and vote at the facilities are not required to show photo IDs. Registered voters over the age of 65 may request an absentee ballot and vote by mail.

"The goal of the town hall meeting is to educate the public and prepare voters for the upcoming 2012 elections," Richard Holden, administrator of elections said. "We want voters to have plenty of time to obtain a valid photo ID if they do not already possess one. We encourage everyone to attend the November 1 meeting."

For more information about the new voting requirements, contact Mark Goins, coordinator of elections, or Andrew Dodd, elections specialist, in the state Division of Elections at 1-877-850-4959 or your local county election commission at 901-545-2600.