



JIMMY CARTER

March 16, 2006

To Secretary of State Robin Carnahan

I understand that proponents of the Missouri Senate Bill 1014 have used the report written by the Commission on Federal Election Reform, which I co-chair, to suggest that we as a Commission support the bill. That is not the case. I prefer not to comment on the Senate Bill 1014 except to say that as far as I understand the bill, it is quite different from what we proposed on voter identification.

The Commission's assessments and recommendations regarding voter ID are clearly presented in its report, including on pp. 9-10, 18-21, 33-34, and 45-47 (see www.american.edu/ia/cfer), and in the article that Secretary of State James A. Baker, III, and I wrote for *The New York Times*. The key points on voter ID in the Commission's report are as follows:

- The Commission's recommendations are intended both to enhance ballot security and to increase voter participation.
- The Commission recommends a national standard for voter ID based on the REAL ID card. The use of REAL ID cards for voting purposes would allow a driver's license to double as a voting card.
- Because approximately 12 percent of citizens do not have a driver's license, our bipartisan commission recommended that states take the initiative and mobilize the resources to seek out citizens to both register voters and provide non-drivers with free ID cards. States should open new offices, use social service agencies, and deploy mobile offices to go to seniors and the disabled and to all other groups who are not registered. By connecting IDs to registration, we want for voter participation to be expanded.
- The Commission's proposal differs from the voter ID law Georgia passed last year, because that law did not go far enough to make IDs accessible to eligible voters or to provide IDs to non-drivers free of charge.
- Under the Commission's proposal, voters without photo IDs would be able to cast provisional ballots. Until 2010, their votes would count if the signature they placed on the ballot matched the one on file with the election office. After 2010, people who forget their photo IDs could cast provisional votes that would be counted if they returned with their ID within 48 hours.

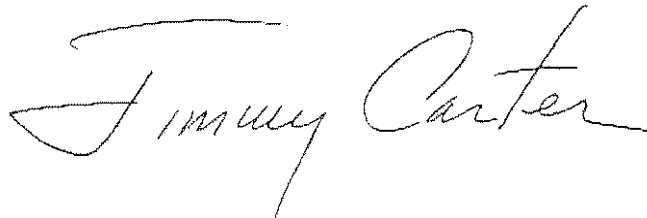
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The overall point of the Commission's recommendations is that a photo ID based on the Real ID card would be helpful in raising confidence in the electoral system provided that states play an affirmative role in reaching out to help people obtain a free card.

If SB1014 does not have such an active and comprehensive plan to register voters who are not now registered or who do not have voter IDs, and if it does not provide them with free voter IDs, then that is quite different from our report, and we could not support that. Also, if the new system would require the use of IDs as early as this year, that would not provide the kind of transition envisaged in our report.

Our Commission worked hard to reach a bipartisan consensus that took into account concerns that some had for access to voting and concerns that others had for ballot security. In our judgment, a good election process needs to address both concerns. That was the purpose of our recommendation. We hope that Missouri's law does the same.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jimmy Carter". The signature is written in dark ink and is centered on the page.

The Honorable Robin Carnahan
Missouri Secretary of State
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