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Super Majority Supports Giving Voters a Non-Photo Option And Opposes Restrictions that Target Particular Groups

RALEIGH - A survey by one of the nation's most respected polling firms adds new insights into how North Carolinians view a proposed requirement for voters to show a government-issued photo identification document before voting.

The poll by SurveyUSA indicates that 75 percent of voters favor a photo ID requirement, but 70 percent would not turn away a registered voter who doesn't have one, if the voter signs an affidavit and provides a verifiable ID number such as a date of birth or social security number.

The current version of House Bill 589 does not include this back-up option. The bill allows voters without a photo ID to cast a provisional ballot, but the ballot will not count unless the voter returns after Election Day and shows officials a government photo ID.

The poll indicates a strong majority of voters also oppose voting restrictions that are aimed at a particular party or group, and 74 percent agree with the statement, "Legislators should show evidence of significant problems, such as real voter fraud, before they pass laws that make voting more difficult."

Only a third of North Carolina voters think passing a photo ID bill should be a high priority.

"The current ID bill is being sold as a way to improve confidence in our elections, but it includes features that voters recognize as unreasonably harsh," said Jo Nicholas, president of the League of Women Voters of NC, which sponsored the poll.

"A large majority would allow a voter who takes an oath and provides a personal identifying number to cast a ballot," she said. "That's what the bill will require of a person who votes through the mail. Why would legislators put a heavier burden on voters who show their face to an election official?"

According to the poll, support for a photo ID requirement drops from 75 percent to 59 percent when callers are told it would have a disproportionate impact on African-American voters. It falls to 54 percent when voters hear that it could cause difficulties for seniors who no longer drive and women with a different name on their driver's license than their voter registration card.

One reason for sustained support: fully 40 percent of all voters (48% of Republicans) agree that "cases of people voting in the name of someone else are commonplace," despite the lack of hard evidence.

Republicans are twice as likely as Democrats to say adopting the law is a high priority – but it's a minority in both parties (47% of Republican vs. 24% of Democrats). Meanwhile, 65 percent of Republicans also say voters without an ID should not be turned away at the polls if they sign an attestation and provide a verifiable identifying number.

"Overall, a photo ID is a lower priority for voters than for politicians, and ordinary voters are more reasonable in how they would apply it," said Nicholas. "I'm sure they would not understand why legislators would pass a law that says a photo ID from a public college is acceptable but one from a private college is not."

The poll of 803 voters who mirror the make-up of North Carolina's 6.4 million registered voters was conducted between April 11 and April 14, with a 3.5 percent margin of error. In addition to the League, it was co-sponsored by the election reform group Democracy North Carolina. Both organizations oppose the voter ID legislation. SurveyUSA is the nation's largest public opinion polling firm; its clients include most the nation's largest media companies.

SurveyUSA Market Research Study #20443

Data Collected: 04/11/2013 - 04/14/2013

803 Responses; 3.5 +/- sample error

RESULTS/CROSSTABS <http://www.surveyusa.com/client/PollPrint.aspx?q=8c5c6269-5692-483a-a5f0-9662c4e5567e&d=0>

NC Voters Support Voter ID Law, But Majority Says Affidavit Will Suffice

75% of North Carolina registered voters initially support a new law that would require voters to show a government-issued photo ID, according to a SurveyUSA poll conducted for the League of Women Voters of NC and Democracy North Carolina.

But 91% of voters say voting should be free, fair and accessible to all North Carolina citizens.

A majority of voters are responsive to the arguments against a photo ID law:

- * 72% say it's wrong to pass laws that make it harder for certain people to vote.
- * 62% say they oppose an ID law that makes it harder for people of one party to vote.
- * 74% say there should be demonstrated problems before legislators apply a fix.

When voters are asked the re-presented question after hearing multiple arguments, a majority still supports a new voter ID law (54% support a new law in Question 4; 59% support a new law in Question 10; 60% support a new law in Question 11).

But voters also favor an alternative to turning away people who are willing to sign a sworn statement about their identity:

- * 66% say a voter without a photo ID could vote by signing a sworn identity statement.
- * 70% say the voter could vote with the sworn statement and a verifiable ID number.

1. Would you support or oppose a law that requires North Carolina voters to show government-issued photo identification, such as a driver's license or passport, before being allowed to cast a vote in an election?

58%	Strongly Support
17%	Somewhat Support
7%	Somewhat Oppose
15%	Strongly Oppose
3%	Not Sure

2. Federal law already requires identification when you vote the first time. In addition, in North Carolina, you now must provide either your driver's license number or Social Security number when you register to vote, and that number must be verified before your vote can count. Knowing this, do you support or oppose an additional law requiring a voter to present a photo ID when they vote?

55%	Strongly Support
16%	Somewhat Support
9%	Somewhat Oppose
18%	Strongly Oppose
3%	Not Sure

3. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? 'Voting should be free, fair, and accessible to all North Carolina citizens, regardless of age, race, income, or disability.'

80%	Strongly Agree
11%	Somewhat Agree
3%	Somewhat Disagree
3%	Strongly Disagree
2%	Not Sure

4. If you knew that a strict photo ID law would make voting more difficult for some senior citizens who no longer drive ... and for women with a different last name on their voter registration from their driver's license, would you support or oppose a strict photo ID law?

35% Strongly Support
19% Somewhat Support
18% Somewhat Oppose
25% Strongly Oppose
4% Not Sure

5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? 'It's wrong to pass laws for partisan political purposes to make it harder for certain people to vote.'

56% Strongly Agree
16% Somewhat Agree
9% Somewhat Disagree
11% Strongly Disagree
8% Not Sure

6. If you knew that a law requiring a photo ID to vote was being proposed to make it harder for people of a particular party affiliation to vote, would you support or oppose that law?

18% Strongly Support
11% Somewhat Support
14% Somewhat Oppose
48% Strongly Oppose
8% Not Sure

7. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? 'Legislators should show evidence of significant problems, such as real voter fraud, before they pass laws that make voting more difficult.'

53% Strongly Agree
21% Somewhat Agree
8% Somewhat Disagree
13% Strongly Disagree
5% Not Sure

8. Over the past several years, North Carolina election officials have identified just one case of a voter deliberately voting in someone else's name. Others say that hundreds of cases of fraud are happening, with people voting in the name of a dead person or a person who has moved away. Do you think cases of people voting in the name of someone else are rare? Or commonplace? ...

43% Rare
40% Commonplace
18% Not Sure

9. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that a state requiring a photo ID to vote must provide the ID for free to any voter who doesn't have one. Because of this and other expenses, a strict photo ID requirement would cost several million dollars to implement in North Carolina, according to the legislative staff. Should passing a photo ID law be a high priority? A medium priority? Or a low priority? For state legislators?

29% High Priority
28% Medium Priority
39% Low Priority
4% Not Sure

10. A strict photo ID requirement could place a greater hardship on African Americans, who are about 20% of all voters but 31% of the voters who lack a driver's license. Knowing this, do you support or oppose a law requiring a photo ID to vote?

42% Strongly Support
17% Somewhat Support
11% Somewhat Oppose
26% Strongly Oppose
4% Not Sure

11. Having heard this information about the cost to provide IDs and the impact on eligible voters, do you now support or oppose a law that requires North Carolina voters to show a government-issued photo ID, such as a driver's license or passport, before being allowed to vote in an election?

42% Strongly Support
18% Somewhat Support
10% Somewhat Oppose
26% Strongly Oppose
4% Not Sure

12. On a scale from 1 to 10, with one being the lowest priority and 10 being the highest priority, how high of a priority do you think passing a voter identification bill should be for North Carolina legislators?

25% 1
4% 2
6% 3
5% 4
8% 5
5% 6
10% 7
11% 8
9% 9
16% 10

13. One proposal for a photo ID law in North Carolina would follow the model used in Florida, Michigan and several other states. In those states, voters are asked to show a photo ID, but voters who arrive at the polls without an ID can sign a sworn statement, under penalty of perjury, and then cast a ballot, rather than be turned away. Do you agree that a voter willing to sign a sworn statement about their identity should not be turned away?

42% Strongly Agree
24% Somewhat Agree
11% Somewhat Disagree
17% Strongly Disagree
5% Not Sure

14. Another proposal would allow voters without a photo ID to cast a ballot if they sign a sworn statement, under penalty of perjury, and also give a personal identification number that can be verified, such as a birth date or Social Security number. Do you agree that voters should not be turned away if they are willing to sign a sworn statement and give the election official a personal identification number that can be verified?

48% Strongly Agree
22% Somewhat Agree
11% Somewhat Disagree
16% Strongly Disagree
4% Not Sure