

## (September 20, 2006) Lipinski Votes To Ensure that All U.S. Citizens Have the Opportunity To Vote

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Lipinski Statement on H.R. 4844, the "Federal Election Integrity Act of 2006"

Today, Congressman Daniel Lipinski gave the following statement after voting against H.R. 4844, the "Federal Election Integrity Act of 2006." This legislation imposes new ID requirements on all voters in federal elections. Starting in 2008, voters would have to present a government-issued photo ID in order to vote or register to vote. In 2010, voters would have to show proof of U.S. citizenship. Those voters who are voting by mail would have to send in a photocopy of their proof of citizenship.

"I strongly believe that we must maintain the integrity of the United States electoral process. Under current laws, falsely claiming citizenship and voter fraud are already federal offences. In addition, non-citizens who try to vote are automatically given a one-way ticket out of the country, with no criminal conviction necessary.

"H.R. 4844, the Federal Election Integrity Act of 2006, deceptively promises to improve our voting laws. Unfortunately, this bill would only have the practical effect of penalizing U.S. citizens who want to exercise their right to vote, and would have a particularly devastating impact on seniors. Because of the negative impact that this legislation would have on seniors, groups such as AARP opposed H.R. 4844.

"Study after study shows that imposing a photo ID requirement would have a disproportionate impact on the elderly. Many seniors no longer drive and therefore no longer have licenses. Without a photo ID such as a license, these seniors would be ineligible to vote in 2008. Furthermore, according to the State Department, only 25-27% of eligible Americans have passports - the only government issued photo ID that currently proves citizenship. That means 75 percent of eligible Americans, many of them seniors on fixed incomes, would need to pay \$97 to obtain a passport in order to vote.

I believe that it is important to both ensure that only citizens are able to vote and that voters are who they claim to be. Congress and the states are already working on this important task. Unfortunately, H.R. 4844 would put the burden of proving citizenship - including the financial burden - on eligible voters. By forcing citizens to either buy a passport or another form of identification that is not easily available, voting will become unaffordable and difficult for many citizens. Citizens should not have to pay to vote, especially our seniors."