



STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

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LT. GOVERNOR

October 29, 2021

Michigan Senate
State Capitol Building
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Senators,

SENATE ENROLLING
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Today I am returning two election-related bills to you without approval.

Every citizen of Michigan has the constitutionally guaranteed right to vote and deserves to exercise that right in safe and secure elections.

Enrolled Senate Bills 303 and 304 together would eliminate the option for Michigan voters to submit an affidavit, signed under penalty of perjury, attesting to their identity and eligibility when attempting to vote without a photo ID. To be clear, there is no evidence that use of affidavit ballots is related to voter fraud. In fact, the Michigan Senate Oversight Committee recently concluded that the 2020 election produced no significant evidence of fraud. Yet this voting restriction would disenfranchise the more than 18,000 voters who relied on the affidavit ballot in recent elections.

These bills would disproportionately harm communities of color. After the 2016 election, a random sample of affidavit ballots revealed that about 0.5% of voters lacked access to ID on election day, yet nearly all of those affidavit ballot voters actually possessed state-issued identification. Non-white voters were about five times more likely to lack access to ID on election day than white voters. Voting restrictions that produce such a racially disparate impact must never become law in this state.

Nevertheless, I would be proud to sign common sense election reforms that would strengthen our democracy, including bills:

- improving military families access to the ballot by allowing active-duty Michiganders and spouses serving overseas to vote electronically,
- removing barriers to voting absentee by establishing a permanent absent voter list, and,
- expediting election returns by allowing sufficient time for preprocessing of absentee ballots.

As the late John Lewis said: "Freedom is not a state; it is an act. Freedom is the continuous action we all must take, and each generation must do its part to create an even more fair, more just society."

Sincerely,

Gretchen Whitmer
Governor