



April 1, 2025

Via email

State Affairs Committee
House Government Operations Subcommittee
Florida House of Representatives
303 House Office Building
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Re: Student ID as Voter ID is Critical for Student Voters (HB 1381)

To the Members of the House Government Operations Subcommittee:

As organizations who advocate for students' ability to have a say at the ballot box in the communities in which they live and study¹ we write in opposition to HB 1381, and specifically to urge the Florida legislature to maintain the current use of student ID as voter ID. Removing student ID as a means of proving identity to vote would make it harder to vote for many students who do not have a Florida driver license, without any corresponding benefit to Florida elections, which Florida's Secretary of State in 2020 called "safe, secure and orderly."² These barriers will particularly impact students who attend private universities. These barriers are only compounded by the requirements for documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote also included in HB 1381.

¹ Fair Elections Center is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to removing barriers to voter registration and voting through advocacy and impact litigation. Its Campus Vote Project educates and engages young voters on voting rights issues and works to institutionalize civic engagement at university and college campuses.

VoteRiders is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that provides voter ID education and outreach across Florida, helping communities understand ID requirements and ensuring eligible voters have the information and support they need to vote with confidence.

² Fla. Dep't of State, *Florida Secretary of State Laurel M. Lee Credits Governor DeSantis for Successful Election Year*, Press Release (Dec. 23, 2020), <https://dos.fl.gov/communications/press-releases/2020/florida-secretary-of-state-laurel-m-lee-credits-governor-desantis-for-successful-election-year/>.

Both the current version and the sponsor's proposed strike-all amendment for HB 1381 would strike student identification from the list of accepted identification types.³

For many students, their campus is their community—and their student ID is their most trusted, familiar form of identification. Students are less likely to have traditional forms of ID like a driver's license—especially if they are from out-of-state, do not own a car, or rely on campus transportation. This makes student IDs one of the few accessible forms of ID they carry daily. Student IDs have also become increasingly important on college campuses as students and institutions commonly depend on them for many crucial functions, such as access to restricted buildings or dormitories, or completing financial transactions at on- and off-campus businesses.

Students balancing school, work, and family responsibilities often do not have the time, transportation, or money to get new forms of ID. Costs for IDs, replacement documents, or transportation to DMV offices are real barriers. And increasingly fewer young people are applying for driver's licenses,⁴ opting instead for cheaper and more accessible methods of transportation such as Uber and Lyft. In 2021, only 60% of 18-year-olds had a driver's license while over 90% of those over the age of 35 had one.⁵ According to 2024 research, 41% of U.S. 18–24-year-olds do not have a driver's license with their current name and/or address. Nearly 1 in 3 young adults ages 18–29 faces potential voting difficulties due to lacking ID or having an ID with outdated name or address. And 35% of young white adults, 30% of young Hispanic adults, and 28% of young Black adults have ID issues that could cause problems voting.⁶

Other permissible ID forms for voting, such as military IDs or state and local government employee IDs, are substantially less common among student populations. Therefore, it is crucial to allow student voters to use one of the most widely held forms of identification among them—student IDs.

Changes to voter ID laws create confusion and misinformation—students are often the last to know the rules have changed until it is too late. This is especially harmful for students who move frequently or are new to the state. And although registered students who do not have another approved form of voter ID would be able to cast a provisional ballot, young people are the most

³ The bill adds all forms of government-issued ID to acceptable forms, with the result that public, but not private school student identification, would suffice as voter ID.

⁴ Shannon Osaka, *'I'll call an Uber or 911': Why Gen Z doesn't want to drive*, WASH. POST (Feb. 13, 2023), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2023/02/13/gen-z-driving-less-uber/>.

⁵ Fed. Hwy. Admin., *Highway Statistics 2023*, Driver Licensing, Table DL-20, U.S. DEP'T OF TRANSP. (Jan. 2025), <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2023/dl20.cfm>.

⁶ Jillian Andres Rothschild et al., *Who Lacks ID in America Today? An Exploration of Voter ID Access, Barriers, and Knowledge*, CTR. FOR DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, UNIV. OF MD. (Jan. 2024), <https://cdce.umd.edu/sites/cdce.umd.edu/files/pubs/Voter%20ID%202023%20survey%20Key%20Results%20Jan%202024%20%281%29.pdf>.

likely to have their ballots initially rejected due to signature match issues.⁷ The additional time needed to fill out a provisional ballot is also likely to make lines longer.

Given these issues, it is not surprising that only six states nationwide strictly limit use of student ID as voter ID.⁸ Florida should not join this small minority.

Voting is our freedom, and every eligible citizen—including students—should have a fair shot at casting their ballot. Therefore, we urge you to reject HB 1381. Alternatively, as it relates to the identification needed to cast a ballot, we request that you amend the bill to retain all student IDs as voter ID, because eliminating student ID makes it harder for the newest participants in our democracy to vote, all without any improvement to the security of our elections.

We appreciate your consideration of this important matter, and should you have questions or need additional information, please contact Michelle Kanter Cohen, Policy Director & Senior Counsel, Fair Elections Center.

Sincerely,

Michelle E. Kanter Cohen
Policy Director & Senior Counsel
Fair Elections Center

Taylor Ashley
Florida State Director
VoteRiders

⁷ Lawrence Mower, *Mail ballots of minority, young voters initially rejected at higher rate, study shows*, MIAMI HERALD (March 9, 2021), <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article249803258.html>.

⁸ Ariz. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 16-579(A); N.D. Cent. Code § 16.1-05-07; Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 3503.16(B)(1)(a), *amended by* Ohio Sub. H.B. 458 (2023); S.C. Code Ann. § 7-13-710; Tenn. Code Ann. § 2-7-112(c); Tex. Election Code Ann. § 63.001 et seq.