



**THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
**For The People & The Press**

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## Broad Support for Photo ID Voting Requirements

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# Broad Support for Photo ID Voting Requirements

Proposals to require voters to show photo identification before being allowed to vote draw overwhelming support. By 77% to 20%, voters favor a requirement that those voting be required to show photo ID. Opinion about this is little changed from six years ago, when 80% of voters supported voter photo ID requirements.

Several states have enacted strict photo ID voting requirements, but there have been court challenges to many of these laws. Last week, a Pennsylvania judge blocked enforcement of that state's voter ID law.

In a national survey of 1,263 registered voters, conducted Sept. 12-16 by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, nearly all (98%) say they are confident that they have the identification they will need at the polls on Nov. 6.

## Most Support Photo ID Requirements, Voters Confident they Have Necessary ID

<i>Should voters be required to show official photo ID before they vote on Election Day?</i>	All RVs	Rep	Dem	Ind
	%	%	%	%
Should	77	95	61	83
Should not	20	5	34	15
Don't know	<u>3</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Are you confident you have the identification you might need to vote?</i>				
Yes	98	98	97	98
No	1	*	1	1
Need no identification (Vol.)	1	1	1	1
Don't know	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>*</u>
	100	100	100	100

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 12-16, 2012. Based on registered voters. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

There are partisan differences in views of photo ID requirements for voters, though majorities of Republicans, Democrats, and independents favor such requirements. Fully 95% of Republican voters say a photo ID should be required to vote, as do 83% of independents. By comparison, 61% of Democrats who say photo identification should be required; 34% say it should not. Liberal Democrats are about equally divided on this question (46% should be required, 48% should not).

## Most Voters in States with Photo ID Laws Know about Requirements

Just four states (Georgia, Indiana, Kansas and Tennessee) have strict photo identification requirements in effect for the 2012 election, in which voters must show official photo identification to vote. About nine-in-ten voters (92%) in these states know that their state requires photo identification.

Laws vary in other states, but for the most part, voters are aware of the voting requirements in their state. About three-quarters (77%) of voters in states where

photo ID requirements are less stringent know that a photo ID is required. And 67% of those in states with requirements for identification (though not necessarily photo identification) say photo identification is required.

Many states have no voter identification requirements, and 48% of voters in these states correctly say that their state does not require photo identification, although 38% say that photo identification is required to vote in their state.

Support for photo identification laws is somewhat higher among voters in states with some voter identification requirements (83%) than among those in states without laws requiring voters to show identification at the polls (70%).

For more on opinions about voter identification requirements by race and ethnicity, see the Pew Hispanic Center's report: ["Latino Voters Support Obama by 3-1 Ratio, But Are Less Certain than Others about Voting."](#) Oct. 11, 2012.

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### Knowledge of State Photo ID Laws

Does your state require photo ID to vote?	State Voter ID Requirements*			
	Strict photo ID	Photo ID, less strict	ID, photo not required	No voter ID
	%	%	%	%
Yes	92	77	67	38
No/Vote by mail (Vol.)	1	13	22	48
Don't know	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>14</u>
	100	100	100	100
<i>Should voters be required to show official photo ID before they vote?</i>				
Should	85	80	84	70
Should not	14	18	14	26
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
	100	100	100	100
N	103	173	442	490

PEW RESEARCH CENTER Sept. 12-16, 2012. Based on registered voters. State designations detailed in survey methodology and based on those used by the National Conference of State Legislatures: <http://www.ncsl.org>. \*Excludes PA. The ruling blocking the law in the 2012 election was made after the survey was fielded.

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## About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted with 1,263 registered voters, a subset of the full sample asked the questions reported here. The survey was conducted September 12-16, 2012, among a total national sample of 3,019 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (1,806 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 1,213 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 599 who had no landline telephone). Data collection was managed by Princeton Survey Research Associates International and conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source and Abt SRBI. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the March 2011 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status and relative usage of landline and cell phones (for those with both), based on extrapolations from the 2011 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus...
Form 2 registered voters	1,263	3.2 percentage points
<i>Among form 2 registered voters:</i>		
Republican voters	365	6.0 percentage points
Democratic voters	468	5.3 percentage points
Independent voters	383	5.8 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

State voter identification requirements were identified based on those used by the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) as follows:

States that have strict photo ID laws are: Georgia, Indiana, Kansas and Tennessee.

States that have less strict photo ID laws are: Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Michigan, New Hampshire, and South Dakota.

States with ID laws (may be strict or not), but do not require that ID to include a photo are : Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington.

State with no ID laws: California, Washington, D.C., Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

Pennsylvania is not included in the analysis of state voter identification requirements. A judge ruled after this survey was fielded that the state law's photo identification requirements could not take effect in the 2012 election.

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS**  
**SEPTEMBER 2012 POLITICAL SURVEY**  
**FINAL TOPLINE**  
**September 12-16, 2012**  
**N=3,019**

**NO QUESTIONS 1-4, 6, 10**  
**QUESTIONS 5-9 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL REGISTERED VOTERS (REG=1):**

Q.11 Are you confident that you have the identification you might need to be allowed to vote in your state, or not?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=2,424]:**

Sep 12-16  
2012  
 98 Yes  
 1 No  
 1 Do not need any identification to vote (VOL.)  
 \* Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**NO QUESTIONS 12-14, 18-20, 31, 42**  
**QUESTIONS 15-17, 21-30, 32-41 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY:**

On a different subject...

Q.43F2 As far as you know, does your state require voters to present photo identification to be allowed to vote on Election Day, or not?

**BASED ON FORM 2 REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1,263]:**

Sep 12-16  
2012  
 61 Yes  
 28 No  
 1 My state is vote by mail (VOL.)  
 11 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**ASK FORM 2 ONLY:**

Q.44F2 Do you think voters should or should not be required to show an official photo identification before they are allowed to vote on Election Day?

**BASED ON FORM 2 REGISTERED VOTERS [N=1,263]:**

Sep 12-16  
2012  
 77 Should  
 20 Should not  
 3 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**TREND FOR COMPARISON, BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS:**

*On Election Day, should voters be required to show an official photo identification, such as a Drivers' License, or shouldn't they have to do this?*

Oct  
2006  
 80 Should show photo ID  
 16 Should not have to do this  
 3 Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

**NO QUESTIONS 45, 47-48; QUESTIONS 46,49 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**

**ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

**ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):**

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

**BASED ON REGISTERED VOTERS [N=2,424]:**

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	<i>Lean Rep</i>	<i>Lean Dem</i>
Sep 12-16, 2012	28	37	31	1	*	2	14	13
Jul 16-26, 2012	25	38	33	2	1	2	15	12
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	27	36	34	1	*	2	15	15
Jun 7-17, 2012	28	35	35	1	*	1	17	14
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	28	35	31	2	*	3	13	12
Apr 4-15, 2012	28	34	35	1	*	1	16	12
Mar 7-11, 2012	28	38	31	1	1	1	15	14
Feb 8-12, 2012	32	34	31	1	*	1	13	15
Jan 11-16, 2012	24	33	38	2	*	2	17	14
Jan 4-8, 2012	31	32	32	3	*	2	15	12

**BASED ON GENERAL PUBLIC:**

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	<i>Lean Rep</i>	<i>Lean Dem</i>
Sep 12-16, 2012	24	35	36	2	*	2	14	16
Jul 16-26, 2012	22	33	38	4	*	3	14	15
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	24	33	37	3	*	3	15	17
Jun 7-17, 2012	24	33	39	2	*	2	17	17
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	24	32	36	4	*	4	13	14
Apr 4-15, 2012	24	31	39	3	*	2	15	15
Mar 7-11, 2012	24	34	36	3	1	2	16	17
Feb 8-12, 2012	26	32	36	4	1	2	13	17
Jan 11-16, 2012	22	31	42	3	*	2	17	16
Jan 4-8, 2012	26	31	35	4	*	4	14	14

**Yearly Totals**

2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--