

**Election Laws**  
2009 LWVIL Issues Briefing  
Mary-Lou Aagaard, LWVIL Election Laws Specialist

The second session of the 95th General Assembly approved several pieces of election related legislation of interest to the League.

**SB1872** – Removed the greater number of signatures required on petitions for county officers in DuPage County and became **PA 95-0916** on Aug. 26, 2008 taking effect on Jan. 1, 2009.

**SB2314** – The Homebound Absentee Voting bill became **PA 95-0878** on Aug. 21, 2008 and took effect on Jan. 1, 2009. This law allows voters to have a ballot personally delivered to them if they were admitted to a hospital, nursing home or rehab center 14 days before Election Day. Previously it was 5 days before Election Day.

**HB1685** – Created an agreement among the states to elect the president by national popular vote. It became **PA 95-0714** on April 7, 2008 with an effective date of January 1, 2009.

**HB4174** – Addressed some ballot instruction problems by amending the municipal code so when more than one person is to be elected for an office, the instructions are changed to “vote for not more than” with the maximum number given. It also amends the election code to require that the words “no candidate” be printed on the ballot below the title of each office for which there is no candidate on the ballot or no person who filed a declaration to be a “write-in” candidate. This bill became **PA 95-0682** on Aug. 19, 2008, taking effect on that date.

**HB4588** – Permits municipal electoral boards to meet in their regular governmental meeting places as an alternative to the court house. It became **PA 95-0872** on Aug. 21, 2008 and took effect on Jan. 1, 2009.

At the end of the session, four bills of interest remained in committee:

**HB4403** – would require voters to present a voter photo ID in the polling place. In May the League submitted testimony to the House Elections Committee in opposition to this bill.

**HB4453** - would permit an open primary in Illinois.

**HB2673** – would reestablish straight party voting.

**HJRCA0028** – a proposed constitutional amendment to permit recall of Illinois elected officials.

The **Election Day Voter Registration Commission**, created by the General Assembly in August 2007, was to study and report to the State Board of Elections and the General Assembly on the possible implementation of Election Day voter registration. The Commission completed its work in November. The commission is recommending legislation to permit Election Day voter registration for eligible Illinois citizens and that the state provide additional financial support to local election authorities for its implementation.

As this report is being prepared in the first week in January and the new General Assembly has not convened, it is difficult to know what election legislation might be proposed. It seems likely that the voter photo ID bill will be re-introduced and that legislation to implement Election Day Voter Registration will be proposed.