

The Discriminatory Impact & Harm of North Carolina's Voter Photo ID



On April 28, 2023, the North Carolina Supreme reversed its previous decision in *Holmes v. Moore*, which found Senate Bill 824 – North Carolina's voter photo ID law – was enacted by the General Assembly with a racially discriminatory purpose violating the state constitution. As a result, the State Board of Elections is now preparing to implement voter photo ID for the 2023 Municipal Elections, with voting for primaries beginning as early as August 11, 2023. Yet, for most of the last decade and beyond, North Carolinians were not required to present a photo ID to vote and have that vote count.

Who is most likely to be impacted by the implementation of the voter photo ID law? **Senate Bill 824 has a discriminatory impact on Black voters.**

Big picture: S.B. 824 will disproportionately harm Black voters' ability to cast their ballot and have that vote count because these voters are:



More likely to lack a qualifying ID, and to face barriers when obtaining a qualifying ID; and



More likely to encounter problems navigating the supposed fail-safe provisions of the law for those lacking ID, such as the ID exception procedure.

At least **6.65%** of registered North Carolina voters, totaling **480,836 voters**, lack a qualifying ID.

7.61% of Black registered voters, totaling **113,570 voters**, lack a qualifying ID compared with just **5.47%** of white voters.

Black voters are nearly **1.4 times** more likely to be without a qualifying ID than white voters.

This racial disparity increases to **nearly 2 times** as much when considering Black voters with an “active” voter status and who voted in the 2016 and/or 2018 elections.

Process

Dr. Kevin Quinn, Professor of Political Science and Statistics at the University of Michigan, performed a “matching analysis” to estimate the number of registered North Carolina voters who possess a form of qualifying ID under S.B. 824 and then determined, based on analysis of demographic data, whether there was any racial disparity in qualifying ID possession.



The matching analysis was based on **matching records from the North Carolina voter registration file with individual records from a multitude of other ID providers, including, the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles, the University of North Carolina system, certain North Carolina community colleges and private postsecondary institutions, and certain North Carolina state agencies, including the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Health & Human Services, the Office of State Human Resources, and the Retirement Systems.**



Data related to approved federal photo IDs (such as passports and military IDs), tribal enrollment IDs, and certain other qualifying IDs were not obtainable for the matching analysis; however, Dr. Quinn found that **those IDs would be more likely to increase the racial disparity because the predominate form of other IDs, like passport, are held disproportionately by white voters.**



This analysis by Dr. Quinn’s is the **most robust matching analysis ever performed concerning S.B. 824.** The State Board of Election’s matching analysis for S.B. 824 only considered DMV-issued IDs and did not study racial data or impact. The General Assembly, meanwhile, chose not to conduct an analysis of ID possession rates in North Carolina in connection with S.B. 824.

[Read Dr. Quinn's report here.](#)



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