

## ON ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF VOTING AGE OHIO CITIZENS WHO LACK A DRIVER'S LICENSE OR STATE ID

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### **Introduction**

The number of adults lacking a driver's license or state-issued photo ID (abbreviated here as "DL/ID") comes up repeatedly in disputes over election legislation. Most frequently, it arises in debates over requiring a DL/ID in order to vote, where proponents sometimes use raw data to show that there would be very few individuals lacking DL/ID. Accordingly, the proponents claim that the cost to the state of issuing IDs would be low and only a small number of people would have the added burden of obtaining a state photo-ID. Similarly, other election legislation that makes registration, application for a mail-in ballot, or completion of a provisional ballot more difficult or requires a full 9-digit social security number for those without DL/ID (e.g. Ohio Senate Bill 148 as of May 24), may fail to take into account the large number of voters that would be negatively affected.

The following method, which uses Ohio data to calculate the number of voters without DL/ID, should be applicable to other states. The method led to the conclusion that the officially stated number of Ohio adults with DL/ID (8.7 million) was inflated, which would lead to an erroneously low estimate (170,000) of Ohioans lacking DL/ID. The more accurate estimate determined here of about 940,000 Ohioans lacking DL/ID was consistent with studies done elsewhere and with the actual experience of Indiana, which has issued free voting IDs for 4 years.

### **Official statement**

The sponsors of Ohio House Bill 159 cited a report by the Ohio Legislative Service Commission (LSC) which claims that "there are 8.7 million people in Ohio, age 18 or older, that have either a driver's license or a state identification card. Thus, it seems likely that the number of registered voters who lack the required identification and are indigent is small"<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, the difference between Ohio's 2010 population, 18 years old and older, 8,825,426 (based on US Census reports) and the 8,655,105 Ohio citizens 18 years and older apparently with DL/ID is only about 170,000, or about 2% of the adult population.

### **Calculation of Ohio adults lacking DL/ID**

The claim that 8.7 million Ohioans 18 years and older have a license or state ID overlooks information that would lower this number by about 770,000, i.e. indicating there would be about 770,000+170,000 Ohioans over 18 who lack DL/ID (not the 170,000 that results from the LSC numbers). Here is how that conclusion is reached:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.lsc.state.oh.us/fiscal/fiscalnotes/129ga/hb0159hr.pdf>

1. Using data from 2010 from the Ohio BMV website<sup>2</sup>, there were 8,831,740 licenses and state ID's. From 2009 data (supplied by the DMV Public Information Office), about 2% of these were from individuals less than 18 years old, so the number for 18 and older is  $.98 \times 8831740$  or 8,655,105 (i.e. approximately equal to the 8.7 that were claimed by the LSC).
2. According to the same website, there were 812,960 administrative and court mandated driver license suspensions and 30,361 12-point suspensions, as of Dec. 31, 2010. The Ohio BMV affirmed that these suspensions were included in the total number of Ohioans with driver's license<sup>3</sup>;
3. Suspended drivers can obtain a state ID, but only a small fraction do because the total number of all state IDs issued in 2010 was 286,598. A conservative guess might be that 100,000 new state ID's were issued to suspended drivers in the current year, and perhaps another 100,000 in previous years, that are still valid and unexpired. Therefore, former drivers with suspended licenses AND without a **valid** photo-ID would be the total of those with suspended licenses minus the 200,000 who obtained a state ID =  $812,960 + 30,361 - 200,000 = 643,321$ .
4. The Ohio BMV affirms that deceased license/ID holders are not regularly purged (in contrast to statewide database of registered voters where there are monthly reports and purges of deaths reported by the Department of Health)<sup>3</sup>. Since there are about 107,000 deaths in Ohio per year<sup>4</sup>, at least 50,000 might still be un-purged from the current year and perhaps 25,000 un-purged with unexpired licenses or IDs from previous years, or a total of 75,000;
5. The best available data (from 2006) for adult Ohioans who moved out of state in one year is 175,364<sup>5</sup>, and perhaps 30% of these, or about 50,000 might not get new licenses or IDs in the state to which they moved, and would therefore still be un-purged from the list of Ohio drivers<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://bmv.ohio.gov/facts\\_figures.stm](http://bmv.ohio.gov/facts_figures.stm)

<sup>3</sup> In a communication dated April 4, 2011, the Ohio BMV agreed that the following statement, submitted for their approval, was "OK": The total number of Ohio "licensed drivers and identification card holders" listed on the BMV website ([www.bmv.ohio.gov/facts\\_figures.stm](http://www.bmv.ohio.gov/facts_figures.stm)) for 2010 is 8,831,740. However, as explained by a BMV official or shown on the BMV website, the actual number of card-holders is much lower:

1. 812,960 licenses were suspended in 2010 but are still listed in the total number (8,831,740). Some of these suspended individuals may have obtained a state-ID, but only a fraction did so because the total number of ID cards issued in 2010 was 286,598;

2. There is no automatic deletion of individuals who become deceased, so many may still be included in the total number of card-holders.

3. Individuals who move out of state but do not cancel their license or get another, will also remain on the list until their license expires.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr59/nvsr59\\_04.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr59/nvsr59_04.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Determine out-of-state migrations from Ohio by adding up for all other states the number of those coming from Ohio, using MS Excel "Table and multiplying by 0.765 (% OH population 18 years old and older). Movers Within and Between States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico", US Census, American Community Survey, 2006" available at:

<http://search.census.gov/search?q=migration+&search.x=23&search.y=7&site=acs&filter=0&entqr=0&out>

Based on the above considerations and assumptions, the apparent number of adult Ohioans with DL/ID (about 8,655,105) is too large because it includes 643,321 suspensions/revocations, 75,000 possible deceased individuals and 50,000 possible unexpired licenses or IDs of those who left the state. The more correct number of Ohioans with DL/ID would therefore be:

$$8,655,105 - 643,321 - 75,000 - 50,000 = 7,886,784$$

And therefore the numbers of Ohioans lacking DL/ID would be the total 18-and-over adult population (8,825,426) minus those who do have these items of identification (7,886,784), which gives 938,642 adult Ohioans, or about 11% of the adult population.

### Conclusions

**These calculations, using conservative assumptions where necessary, lead to an estimate of about 940,000 Ohioans who have neither a valid driver's license nor a state ID, as opposed to the 170,000 number that was implied by the LSC. The 938,000 estimate agrees reasonably well with:**

- 1) A Brennan Center survey finding<sup>6</sup> that up to 11% of citizens have neither driver's license or state ID (938,000 is 11% of Ohio's 2010 population 18 years and older); and**
- 2) A 2007 survey poll in Indiana showing that 16% of the adult population lacks DL/ID<sup>7</sup>; and**
- 3) The actual experience of Indiana over 4 years issuing state IDs for voting<sup>8</sup>. Indiana has half the number of registered voters compared to Ohio and issues nearly 200,000 state-IDs for voting per year. If 50% of the Ohio's 940,000 wished to vote under a system requiring government-issued photo-ID, about 470,000 state ID's would need to be obtained, i.e. about twice the number issued by Indiana which has about half the population of Ohio.**

This essay deals only with total numbers of adult Ohioans lacking DL/ID. However, it is clear from studies such as the one cited (Indiana, 2007)<sup>6</sup> that among the total numbers of those lacking DL/ID, certain subpopulations, e.g. low-income, young and aged adults, and African-Americans are disproportionately affected. For instance, a small survey of 353 low-income tenants by the Cleveland Tenants Organization in 2011 found that 60 tenants (17%) had neither Driver's License nor state ID.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.brennancenter.org/page/-/d/download\\_file\\_39242.pdf](http://www.brennancenter.org/page/-/d/download_file_39242.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> The disproportionate impact of Indiana voter ID requirements on the electorate. Barreto, Nuno, & Sanchez. Washington Institute for the study of ethnicity and race4, 2007.  
[http://faculty.washington.edu/mbarreto/papers/PS\\_VoterID.pdf](http://faculty.washington.edu/mbarreto/papers/PS_VoterID.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> A report on Photo ID for Voting Purposes, Iowa State Association of County Auditors,  
<http://www.lwwi.org/Portals/0/IssuesAdvocacy/PDF/ISACA%20Voter%20ID%20Report%20020211%20final2%5B1%5D.pdf>