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ACLU Files Challenge to Arkansas Voter ID Law

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LITTLE ROCK, Ark. – The American Civil Liberties Union of Arkansas and Arkansas Public Law Center today filed a lawsuit challenging the state's voter ID law. The complaint charges the law violates the Arkansas Constitution by impairing the right to vote and by adding to the voting qualifications already set out in the Constitution.

The law, passed in 2013, places additional restrictions on Arkansans by prohibiting them from exercising their fundamental right to vote unless they present government-approved photo ID. Based on national estimates, 10% of Arkansas voters lack the necessary ID. The law does not provide any assistance in helping voters obtain ID, such as transportation, payment for documents needed to obtain ID such as birth certificates, or aid in locating such documents.

"People who have been qualified to vote their entire adult lives are now being blocked from doing so by this unnecessary and unconstitutional law," said Rita Sklar, executive director of the ACLU of Arkansas. "The Arkansas Constitution specifically outlines the qualifications needed to vote. The state should be ashamed of making it harder for eligible voters from exercising this most fundamental right than our own Constitution requires."

If voters do not have photo ID, they must make cast a provisional ballot then a separate trip to the county clerk and swear that they are too "indigent" to obtain ID, which is intimidating and humiliating, as well as a burden, according to the ACLU.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of several individuals impacted by this law. They include:

- Joe Flakes who was born in Arkansas 78 years ago but never issued a birth certificate. State law requires three forms of ID before a delayed birth certificate will be issued. Joe would have to go to court to ask them to order a delayed birth certificate be issued before he can obtain sufficient ID to vote.
- Toylanda Smith and Freedom Kohls, neither of whom can obtain a copy of their birth certificate or vote because they do not have required photo ID to obtain their birth certificates or to vote. They do not have ID required to obtain their birth certificates.

The case, *Kohls, et. al. v Martin*, was filed in the Pulaski County Circuit Court against Arkansas Secretary of State Mark Martin and The State Board of Election Commissioners, who have the duty to regulate, implement, monitor and enforce election laws in Arkansas.

A copy of the complaint and client profiles can be found at www.acluarkansas.org

[Read the File-Marked Complaint](#)

[CLIENT PROFILES: KOHLS, et. al. v. MARTIN](#)

[Arkansas Constitutional Provisions on Voting](#)

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