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## Voter ID

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uniquely identifies the ballot for accuracy and the ballot counting process is open for the public to observe.”

“Oregon already has Voter ID, it’s called our signature,” Buehler says on his blog.

Nationally, the Urban League and the NAACP are campaigning strongly against Voter ID laws.

“We’ve seen more states pass more laws in the past year, pushing more voters out of the ballot box than at any point in the last hundred years,” Ben Jealous told Democracy Now’s Amy Goodman, Sept. 6.

“And you know, it’s not simply a Republican thing, because we’ve seen Rick Snyder, Republican governor of Michigan, veto strict photo ID. We’ve seen Bob McDonnell of Virginia actually expand the re-enfranchising of formerly incarcerated people in that state and say to his folks, ‘Don’t even bring me a strict voter ID bill, or I will veto it.’ It’s an extremist thing. It’s a far-right thing. You know, and it’s having a real effect on this race, and it will have a real effect come November.”

Jealous, along with most progressives and civil rights activists, sees Voter ID as part of the long history of voter suppression efforts aimed at Blacks, Latinos, the elderly and poor people in general, who all are less likely to have state-issued photo ID. They’re also part of the Democratic base.

Mike Turzai, the Pennsylvania GOP House majority leader, offered ammunition for that view in June. Boasting of his party’s accomplishments at a state Republican meeting, he said, “Voter ID, which is going to allow Governor Romney to win the state of Pennsylvania: Done.”

Model legislation from the controversial pressure group ALEC was used to craft several state ID laws. Some of the most restrictive – the Texas law that recognizes gun permits but not school ID, for example – are facing legal challenges. But similar laws in Pennsylvania, Idaho or Louisiana, require voters to show government-issued photo ID.

Investigations across the country have found very little evidence of voter fraud, according to a report from the Brennan Center for Justice.

“There have been a handful of substantiated cases of individual ineligible voters attempting to defraud the

election system. But by any measure, voter fraud is extraordinarily rare.”

What’s more, the report concluded, photo ID laws do nothing to prevent the small amount of fraud that exists. Yet those same laws will exclude “millions of voters,” says Keesha Gaskins, senior counsel for the Brennan Center’s democracy program.

“There’s little justification for those laws,” Gaskin says. “I

**‘Oregon already has Voter ID, it’s called our signature’**

--GOP Secretary of State candidate Knute Buehler

know from my own work that voter fraud just isn’t an issue.”

Gaskin points to case studies show voter ID would not have prevented the few cases of fraud that exist.

“If you have someone who is bound and determined to break the law, the answer is enforcement. So the first step is ensuring the existing law is being enforced.

“I think there should be as few barriers between me and my vote as possible.”

The Brennan Center’s latest report, State Restrictions on

Voter Registration Drives,” suggests that the real harm to democracy is that too few people are registered to vote.

“At least 51 million — roughly 25 percent — of voting-age Americans are not registered and cannot vote,” the report says. “That is equivalent to losing the entire eligible voting population of California, New York, and Texas combined. As of 2010, Census data shows that 37 percent of eligible blacks and 48 percent of eligible Hispanics are not registered to vote.”

In Oregon, just two cases of voter fraud have been substantiated since January 2009. In 2010 Brown’s staff investigated allegations that 6,000 dead people had voted. They looked at every case. The result? One single conviction.

In 2011, Lafayette Keaton, 81, was convicted of voting for his dead brother and his son. He also was collecting his brother’s social security benefits. Keaton was fined \$5000 and sentenced to three months in jail for the voter fraud. That was in addition to jail time for the benefits fraud.

The second case involved a Josephine County man who voted using his brother’s ID. He was convicted of four felonies and deported, losing forever his chance to become a citizen.

Read the rest of this story online at [www.theskanner.com](http://www.theskanner.com)



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