



SENATE STATE ADMIN.

EXHIBIT NO. 2

DATE 2.14.05

BILL NO. HB 234

February 14, 2005

TO: Senator Carolyn Squires, Chair State Administration and Members of the Committee

FROM: Joy Bruck, Volunteer Advocate, AARP Montana

RE: Support for SB 234 Revising Election Laws related to identification requirements for voting and first-time voters

Madame Chair and members of the Senate State Administration Committee. My name is Joy Bruck a volunteer advocate for AARP. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization with more than 143,000 members in Montana and over 35 million nationwide.

In 2004, AARP Montana, the Montana Senior Citizens Association and the State Insurance Commissioner's office hosted over two dozen consumer fraud summits. We visited with thousands of seniors and their family members about guarding very fraud-prone documents, like their photo identification, Social Security cards, utility bills, bank statements and other forms of identification.

The individuals who attended the summits were concerned about the new requirement to show identification when voting for a couple of reasons. They were concerned about some people, especially elderly seniors, forgetting copies of their identification in voting booths. They were concerned about inconsistencies in what was considered acceptable identification and the confusion that might cause when going to vote.

They knew that stronger requirements for first time or transfer registrants are appropriate. But most of these people had been registered for years, knew all the judges personally, and took our warnings not to show fraud-vulnerable documents to anyone. Even showing your social security number to a judge you know could allow someone standing beside or behind you to "shoulder surf", and steal your identity information.

We are confident that legal registration technologies, computer signature matching, and other strategies will continue to improve and make our stringent identification requirements unnecessary.

We believe the revisions in Senator Cooney's bill are based on voter/consumer concerns grounded in his experience as our Secretary of State. We strongly support SB 234 and recommend your favorable consideration of this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.