



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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May 2, 2008

CARDIN AND JUDICIARY COMMITTEE REMIND MUKASEY TO FOLLOW THE LAW AND PROTECT ELDERLY, MINORITY AND DISABLED VOTERS

Washington, DC — Today, **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD)** joined eight other members of the Senate Judiciary Committee in urging the Attorney General to uphold the requirements of the *Voting Rights Act of 1965* despite the Supreme Court's recent *Crawford v. Marion County* ruling that rejected a challenge to Indiana's photo-ID law.

"As we approach another national election, I urge Attorney General Mukasey to meet the Department of Justice's responsibilities to ensure that any photo ID requirements adopted by states comply with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. DOJ must ensure that these laws have neither the purpose nor effect of discriminating against or suppressing minority voters," **Senator Cardin** said. "These laws only serve to discourage and disenfranchise eligible voters, particularly those who are least likely to have a driver's license or other government photo ID, such as the elderly, minority voters, and the disabled."

Others signing the letter to Attorney General Mukasey include Senators Kennedy, Durbin, Feingold, Feinstein, Kohl, Leahy, Schumer, and Whitehouse. The full text follows.

May 2, 2008

The Honorable Michael Mukasey
Attorney General
Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Mukasey:

We write to urge the Department to vigorously enforce the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in light of the Supreme Court's decision this week in the voter ID case, Crawford v. Marion County. A 6-3 majority of the Court rejected a facial constitutional challenge to Indiana's requirement that voters must present photo identification to vote, but left open the possibility of challenges to the application of the law, and made clear that the decision in the case was not a rubber stamp for all voter photo identification laws.

The Department of Justice has an independent responsibility to ensure that photo identification requirements in Indiana and other states comply with the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Jurisdictions covered by Section 5 of the Act must demonstrate to the Department that such laws will not have the purpose or effect of discriminating against minority voters. The Department must also be vigilant in ensuring that no jurisdiction implements a photo identification requirement in a manner that dilutes minority votes, in violation of Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

We're concerned that voter photo identification laws may be misused to suppress the voting rights of minority citizens. Because minority, poor and elderly voters are less likely to possess photo identification required for voting under such laws, they are more likely to be disenfranchised by the photo identification requirement and by errors in their application. The likelihood is high that errors will be made in the implementation of these laws, and qualified voters will be prevented from voting. Because such errors are more likely to affect minority voters, it is especially important for the Department to closely monitor the implementation of photo identification laws to ensure compliance with the Voting Rights Act.

We urge you, therefore, to take all appropriate steps by the Department to monitor the implementation of such laws in future elections and to notify the Civil Rights Division and United States Attorneys of their responsibility to do so.

We thank you for your attention to this issue that is fundamental to our democracy, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Benjamin L. Cardin
Richard J. Durbin
Russell D. Feingold
Dianne Feinstein
Edward M. Kennedy
Herb Kohl
Patrick J. Leahy
Charles E. Schumer
Sheldon Whitehouse

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