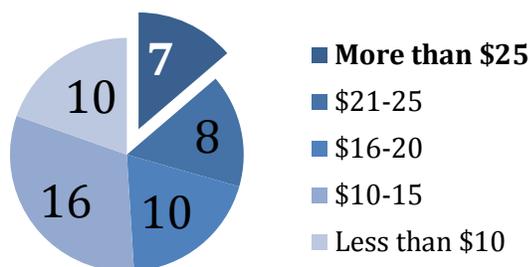


Overview

In November 2013, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed Act 89, a new transportation law that provide funds to be used for infrastructure repairs through PennDOT fee increases, as well as a gas tax. Obtaining or replacing photo identification increased from \$13.50 to \$27.50, and copies of birth certificates or other records increased from \$10 to \$20. These fee increases, effective April/July 2014, have rendered the cost of obtaining ID out of reach for many low-income residents. This issue brief uncovers the impact of this policy on PA citizens, and how to resolve this issue.

Cost of Photo ID by State



PA charges \$27.50 for photo ID, which is the 6th highest cost of all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Of the 6 states that charge more than PA, 3 states offer a hardship waiver – 2 of which are based on benefits. 33 states provide a hardship waiver, yet Pennsylvania does not.

When is ID necessary?

Many critical day-to-day activities require identification:

- Obtaining employment
- Entering office buildings
- Accessing permanent housing
- Receiving medical and behavioral health care, including filling prescriptions
- Opening a bank account or cashing a check

In addition to the day-to-day activities that require identification, eligibility for many public benefits and vital services requires identification:ⁱ

- Medical and behavioral health care
- Social Security benefits
- SNAP (Food Stamps)
- TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
- WIC (Women, Infants and Children)
- Medical Assistance (Medicaid and Medicare)
- Low income utility programs (LIHEAP)

Current Context Across the State

Lack of access to ID and birth certificate impacts hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians across the state. In Philadelphia alone, over 7,000 individuals sought help in obtaining an ID or birth certificate in 2013. However, increases in costs have forced organizations to reduce the number of people they serve, and cover a smaller portion of the cost of ID. Based on usage rates in other states, we believe this program would be used by roughly 20,000 residents per year.

The Question of Access to ID

The poor and indigent face significant obstacles including, but not limited toⁱⁱ:

- Many forms of identification require the applicant to already possess a photo identification and/or birth certificate.
- States do not have a birth record for individuals who were born at home and never officially recorded.
- Low-income and poorly educated people lack the life skills and technology to navigate the application processes, the required documents, or the funds to pay the associated fees.

Who is impacted by changes to the cost of ID?ⁱⁱⁱ

Many people in the U.S. already do not have access to identification. This cost increase puts obtaining identification – and the many benefits that come with it – further out of reach for many Americans.

- As many as 7% of all U.S. citizens – 13 million people - do not have access to the documents that prove their birth and citizenship.^{iv}

Senior Citizens

- 18% of American citizens age 65 and older do not have current government-issued photo identification -- greater than 6 million senior citizens.

Low Income Individuals

- 12% of citizens earning less than \$25,000 per year do not have a readily available U.S. passport, naturalization document, or birth certificate – making them more than twice as likely to lack documentation as those earning more than \$25,000.

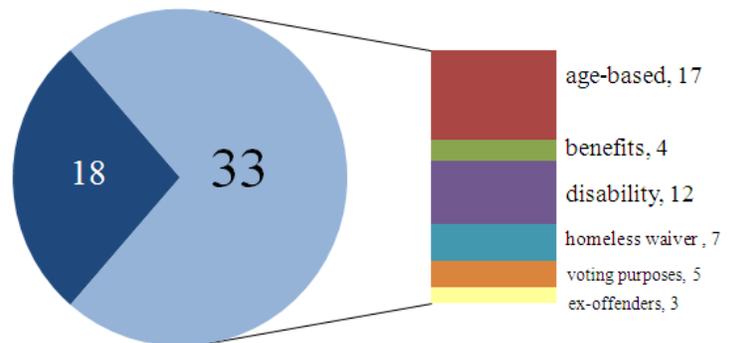
African Americans

- 25% of adult African American citizens do not have current government-issued photo ID -- compared to 8% of adult white citizens.

What Can We Do?

It is time to ensure the most vulnerable Pennsylvanians can access the tools they need to get back on their feet. 33 states already provide a hardship waiver for individuals who cannot afford the cost of identification.

Context for Waivers by State



- 33 states (including the District of Columbia) have a hardship waiver of some kind, as compared to 18 states, including Pennsylvania, that have no hardship waivers.
- 17 states have a waiver based on age, which makes the most common type of waiver.
- 12 states have a waiver for individuals with disabilities – the 2nd most common waiver.
- 10 states offer a hardship waiver in more than one category shown.

PennDOT and the Advisory Health Board can take administrative action TODAY to remedy this issue and institute a hardship waiver for people who need it. Please encourage the Wolf Administration to take action on this issue immediately. Individuals over the age of 60 and residents eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – at or below 130% of poverty – should receive a waiver to ensure they can access identification and birth certificates.

This will ensure all Pennsylvanians will be able to work, care for their families, contribute to their community, and keep this state growing and thriving.

For more information, contact Mary Horstmann at Mary.Horstmann@phila.gov or 215-687-4546.

ⁱ <http://www.aclupa.org/files/8713/7960/9095/Ludt.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.aclupa.org/files/8713/7960/9095/Ludt.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/d/download_file_39242.pdf

^{iv} http://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/d/download_file_39242.pdf