

THE SIMMONS LEGAL NEWS

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June 2012

This is the year of government. Many have prophesized that the people will rise up this year and restore justice.

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November 6, 2012

Highlights

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All Michigan Supreme Court Justices Should be Drug Tested!

By: Nic Morris
Staff Writer

In the past 10 years, there has been a wave of legislators proposing and passing laws to drug test recipients of public assistance. Those states that have adopted such a stance were gravely disappointed when the recipients repeatedly passed those drug testing requirements. "Republican Florida Gov. Rick Scott's plan to test welfare recipients for drugs is costing the state money, despite his claims that the program would actually save tax dollars." Wow, you don't say? Well I think that we should apply this same concept of drug testing recipients of public assistance to the judicial level. Our elected officials are indeed recipients of public assistance, through their wages and benefit packages paid for by taxpayers. They receive 6-figure salaries and free health coverage with no requirement to pass one drug test. How is that fair? It isn't. I know plenty of attorneys who would love to have those jobs and would pass a drug test at any time. How many of our current sitting Justices can say they would pass? I don't know, but I would like to. Wouldn't you? "It is not uncommon for individuals employed in the private sector to be tested for drug use when applying for a job. For business owners, this practice holds employees accountable for their actions, and if they do not pass the drug test, there is a very simple consequence: no job."



Michigan On The Cusp Of Passing Latest Anti-Voting Measure

By Scott Keyes

Michigan is poised to become the latest state to enact legislation making it more difficult for citizens to vote. On June 13, 2012 the State House passed a trio of voter suppression bills – SB 751, SB 754, and SB 803 – that will create new requirements for people registering to vote, as well as groups that help them. Among the new restrictions in these bills:

- **Photo ID to register:** Michiganders who register to vote in person at a government agency would be forced to bring a state-issued photo ID with them. Hundreds of thousands of Michigan residents currently lack such IDs. If they don't bring them, their application will be treated like a mail registration application, preventing them from voting absentee in the next election.
- **Onerous restrictions for voter registration groups:** Outside organizations like the League of Women Voters would be required to register with the state, provide the names and addresses of every volunteer who helps register voters, and force them to obtain training from the Secretary of State or election officials. It's unclear how regularly such trainings would take place. In addition, in the last week of the voter registration period, a particularly high-volume time, groups would be required to submit any completed voter registration forms within two business days. A federal judge blocked a similar provision in Florida two weeks ago.
- **New ways to disenfranchise voters:** Every time voters use an electoral form, whether it be an application or a ballot, they must check off a box affirming they are indeed a U.S. citizen. The measure is wholly unnecessary for three reasons. First, people must affirm they are citizens when they first register. Second, citizenship is not a status that changes. Finally, non-citizens are not trying to vote in the United States. The problem this measure presents is that if a voter shows any hesitation whatsoever – perhaps they aren't a native English-speaker and didn't understand the question – he exposes himself to an elector challenge that could ultimately invalidate his vote.

The Senate has already passed the three bills. Once discrepancies between the two chambers' versions are ironed out, they will likely advance to Gov. Rick Snyder's (R) desk. In a country where 40-60 percent of citizens don't vote, the last thing we should be doing is putting up new barriers that make voting more difficult, not less.

<http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2012/06/13/498987/michigan-anti-voting-measure/?mobile=nc>