

Ellison to fight efforts to take away right to vote for Minnesotans

Written by
Wednesday, 08 February 2012 14:57

Rep. Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) said efforts by Minnesota's Republican legislators would take our country backwards after the Minnesota State Senate held a hearing about a proposed constitutional amendment on the 2012 ballot to require voters to present identification at the ballot box:

"Since our founding, America has been on a path towards greater enfranchisement, not disenfranchisement. It took a Civil War and three constitutional amendments to guarantee voting rights regardless of 'race, color, or previous condition of servitude.' Still, half of our citizenry was left out of our democracy until the 19th Amendment guaranteed women the right to vote. And even then, it took the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to finally prohibit any prerequisite to voting," Ellison said in a statement to the press.

"The current efforts by Republican legislators in my home state of Minnesota would only take our country backwards. Rather than increasing access to the polls, they would disenfranchise tens of thousands of seniors, immigrants and low-income Minnesotans who cannot easily obtain the required identification. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, 21 million Americans do not possess a government-issued ID. These efforts are nothing more than suppression disguised as reform," he said.

"These efforts are part of a broader effort sweeping state legislatures. This year alone, thirty-four states have introduced bills requiring photo identification in order to vote. Combined, more than five million *eligible* voters would find it harder to cast ballots in 2012," he said.

"I have introduced two bills to combat the coordinated effort to restrict voting rights. The Same Day Registration Act would require states to provide same-day voter registration for a federal election. Currently, Minnesota leads the nation in providing election-day voter registration. The Voter Access Protection Act would prohibit federal election officials from requiring photo identification to cast a vote or register to vote," he said.

"I will continue to fight partisan efforts to take away the right to vote from Minnesotans," Ellison said.