

Voter ID proposal approved in Hobbs

Associated Press

HOBBS – Residents in a southeastern New Mexico city have approved a measure that will require people to present a photo ID to vote in municipal elections.

The proposal, which amends the city charter in Hobbs, passed with 78 percent of the vote in Tuesday’s special election. About 1,300 people cast ballots in the city of about 33,000.

The amendment says that if voters don’t have identification, the city will provide it free of charge.

The oil-boom town is the latest battleground over requiring strict identification to cast ballots.

Supporters say the measure would help eliminate potential in-person voter impersonation and increase public confidence in elections.

Civil rights groups argue that voter ID measures disproportionately affect blacks, Latinos, senior citizens and the poor by unduly restricting voting and imposing unnecessary costs.

The election comes on the heels of a record-low turnout in Lea County for November’s midterm elections.

Albuquerque and Rio Rancho already require photo ID for local elections. Previous efforts to get a statewide law have stalled in legislative committees.

In recent years, 34 states have passed laws requiring voters to show some form of identification at the polls, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Recently re-elected Secretary of State Dianna Duran said she’ll again push state lawmakers to consider a voter ID law. She called the special election in Hobbs “encouraging.”