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**SISTERS OF MERCY URGE MISSOURI LAWMAKERS TO REJECT
PROPOSED VOTER ID LAW**

The Sisters of Mercy Regional Community of St. Louis, MO released the following statement today regarding Voter ID legislation pending in the Missouri state legislature.

Last week, several religious sisters were unable to vote in Indiana's presidential primary because they lacked government photo identification. These elderly nuns were turned away from the polls and denied their right to vote because Indiana has one of the most restrictive voter ID laws in the country. Civil rights organizations have criticized such laws in several states as a de facto poll tax that disproportionately affects minorities, the poor and the elderly.

The Missouri legislature is now considering HJR 48, a similar measure that proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to require photo identification to vote in elections. Members of the Missouri Catholic community have expressed grave concerns that citizens in the state, including religious sisters, will be unjustly denied their right to vote if this misguided bill passes.

Up to 240,000 citizens in Missouri could be disenfranchised if proposal becomes law, according to the Secretary of State. Missouri already has an effective voter identification law. A more restrictive law will only make it harder for citizens to vote and undermine civic participation vital to a healthy democracy. Despite no reported cases of voter fraud, implementing the law would cost over \$6 million. At a time when Missourians

desperately want government to address critical needs such as affordable housing, quality health care and jobs that pay living wages, this is a poor use of taxpayers' money.

“We are deeply concerned that legislation of this kind has severe unintended consequences that present substantial barriers for all citizens to exercise their political and moral responsibilities. We strongly urge all citizens in Missouri to contact their representatives and ask them to vote against this measure,” said Sr. Jane Hotstream, RSM, president of the St. Louis Regional Community of the Sisters of Mercy.

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