

REVISITING THE 2024 ELECTION WITH SECRETARIES OF STATE

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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April 8, 2025

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D.C.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:05 p.m., in room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Laurel Lee [chair of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Lee, Loudermilk, Murphy, Miller, Sewell, Morelle, and Johnson.

Staff present: Mike Platt, Staff Director; Rachel Collins, General Counsel; Abby Salter, Deputy General Counsel; Josh Weber, Counsel; Kristen Monterroso, Director of Operations; Marissa Mullen, Deputy Director of Member Services; Annemarie Cake, Deputy Clerk and Professional Staff Member; Jamie Fleet, Minority Staff Director; Kahlil Abboud, Minority Deputy Staff Director; Sean Wright, Minority Chief Counsel; Sarah Nasta, Minority Senior Advisor; Nikolas Youngsmith, Minority Elections Counsel; and Owen Reilly, Minority Professional Staff Member.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. LAUREL LEE, CHAIR OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM FLORIDA

Chair LEE. The Subcommittee on Elections of the Committee on House Administration will come to order.

The title of today's hearing is, "Revisiting the 2024 Election With Secretaries of State."

I note that a quorum is present. Without objection, the chair may declare a recess at any time.

We will do opening statements here today and then recess for the floor vote. We will quickly reconvene after the vote and begin with witness testimony.

Also, without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 5 legislative days so Members may submit any materials they wish to be included therein.

Thank you, Ranking Member Sewell, Members of the Committee, and our witnesses for participating in today's hearing.

Recent elections have produced record high turnout, and, in turn, those elections become the most challenging for elections officials to administrate and process. Presidential, primary, general, and special elections occur around the clock, across States, requiring ef-

ficient administration to provide Americans with free and fair elections.

As a former Secretary of State, I am glad to welcome our witnesses today for an important review of our Nation's most recent Presidential election.

Voters across America went to the polls in record high numbers in 2024 to exercise one of their most fundamental rights. According to our Constitution, the States are responsible for prescribing the times, places, and manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives.

The role of Congress in elections is to provide oversight and to support States in those efforts.

The purpose of our hearing today is to revisit the 2024 election and hear from Secretaries of State who conducted their States' elections this past November. Specifically, we will be looking at what went well and what lessons we can learn from each of the secretaries in administering free and fair elections and how we can continue to protect and promote voter confidence.

I thank all of our witnesses for coming before the Committee today to share your knowledge and expertise on this matter.

During the 2024 election cycle, over 155 million Americans cast their ballots in races for the White House, the Senate, the House of Representatives, Governors' mansions, State legislatures, State supreme courts, and more.

Even with record high turnout, many States were able to report their results on election night for the Presidency. However, some States were significantly delayed in calling races for the Senate and House of Representatives for days, and in some cases, weeks.

Something I was very proud of, as Florida's former chief election official, was how quickly our State was able to call elections with confidence in our results. Undoubtedly, States with laws on the books for pre-processing of mail-in ballots regularly enforced deadlines for receipt on Election Day and consistent post election audits of voter rolls are in the best position to administer their elections without undue delay and to report results on election night, which helps instill voter confidence.

Many States across the country, including most of the States the secretaries here today represent, have taken initiative in enhancing their election security laws.

When Americans feel their vote will count, they are more inclined to take the time to cast a ballot. Americans must know that their vote will not be misplaced, damaged, or otherwise interfered with, but instead, it will be uncounted in a timely manner. Americans must also know that noncitizens' votes will not cancel out a legal vote.

Strengthening our voting laws increases voter confidence and leads to higher turnout in our elections. This most recent election was proof of that.

In Alabama, Louisiana, Idaho, and Ohio, successful election integrity measures have been implemented. Each of these States are evidence of how enhancing election integrity and security can help to manage high voter turnout, voter access, and the rapid process of ballots to certify results on election night.

While States are the primary authority on how elections are conducted, it is our role here in Congress to assist in any way that we can. One way we will be able to help provide resources to States is by passing the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility, or the SAVE Act.

This bill would bring critical reform to the National Voter Registration Act that will help prevent noncitizens from being added to voter rolls. It would also provide States with free access to the DHS save program and the Social Security death data base, which will help States remove noncitizens or deceased persons who should not be on their voter rolls.

In doing so, the SAVE Act would codify many of the measures included in President Trump's recent executive order to strengthen election integrity and security.

Running a successful and uneventful election is no easy task. I am looking forward to learning from each of you about how you successfully ran elections in each of your States in 2024, and how Congress can assist in future elections.

Thank you for being here today. I look forward to our conversation.

With that, I yield to Ranking Member Sewell for an opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Chair Lee follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHAIR OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS LAUREL LEE

Recent elections have produced record high turnout, and in turn, these elections become the most challenging for election officials to administrate and process. Presidential, primary, general, and special elections occur around the clock across States, requiring efficient administration to provide Americans with free and fair elections.

As a former Secretary of State, I am glad to welcome our witnesses today for an important review of our Nation's most recent Presidential election. Voters across America went to the polls in record high numbers in 2024 to exercise one of their most fundamental rights. According to our Constitution, the States are responsible for prescribing the "Times, Places and Manner of holding elections for Senators and Representatives." The role of Congress in elections is to provide oversight and to support States in their efforts.

The purpose of our hearing today is to revisit the 2024 election and hear from the Secretaries of State who conducted their States' elections this past November. Specifically, we will be looking at what went well, and what lessons we can learn from each of the Secretaries in administering free and fair elections, and how we can continue to protect and promote voter confidence. I thank all of our witnesses for coming before the Committee today to share your knowledge and expertise on this matter.

During the 2024 election cycle, over one hundred and fifty-five (155) million Americans cast their ballots in races for the White House, the Senate, the House of Representatives, governor's mansions, State legislatures, State Supreme Courts, and more. Even with record high turnout, many States were able to report their results on election night for the Presidency. However, some States were significantly delayed in calling races for the Senate and the House of Representatives for days, and in some cases, weeks.

Something I was very proud of as Florida's former Chief Elections Official was how quickly our State was able to call elections with the utmost confidence in our results. Undoubtedly, States with laws on the books for pre-processing of mail-in ballots, regularly enforced receipt deadlines for Election Day, and consistent post-election audits of voter rolls are in the best position to administer their elections without undue delay and to report results on election night, which helps instill voter confidence.

Many States across the country, including most of the States the Secretaries here today represent, have taken initiative in enhancing their election security laws. When Americans feel that their vote will count, they are more inclined to take the

time to cast a ballot. Americans must know that their vote will not be misplaced, damaged, or otherwise interfered with, but instead it will be counted in a timely manner. Americans must also know that a noncitizens vote will not cancel out their legal vote.

Strengthening our voting laws increases voter confidence and leads to higher turnout in our elections. This most recent election was proof of that. In Alabama, Louisiana, Idaho, and Ohio, successful election integrity measures have been implemented. Each of these States are evidence of how enhancing election integrity and security can help to manage high voter turnout, voter access, and the rapid process of ballots to certify results on Election Night. While States are the primary authority on how elections are conducted, it is our role here in Congress to assist in any way we can. One way we will be able to help provide resources to States is by passing the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility, or the SAVE Act.

This bill would bring critical reform to the National Voter Registration Act that would help prevent noncitizens from being added to voter rolls. It would also provide States with free access to the DHS SAVE program and the Social Security Death Database, which will help States to remove noncitizens who may be on voter rolls. In doing so, the SAVE Act would codify many of the measures included in President Trump's recent executive order to strengthen election security and integrity. Running a successful and uneventful election is no easy task. I am looking forward to learning from each of you about how you successfully ran elections in each of your States in 2024, and how Congress can assist in future elections.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TERRI SEWELL, RANKING
MEMBER OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS, A U.S.
REPRESENTATIVE FROM ALABAMA**

Ms. SEWELL. Good afternoon, everyone.

As a Ranking Member of the Election Subcommittee, and as a representative of Alabama's civil rights district, there is nothing more important to me than ensuring that every American can cast their ballot.

It was in my hometown of Selma, Alabama, 60 years ago where John Lewis and hundreds of foot soldiers were bludgeoned on the Edmund Pettus Bridge for the equal right of all Americans to vote. However, for the past decade, extremists have fought to undo the hard-won progress that the foot soldiers sought to achieve.

Just last year, lawmakers in 40 States introduced 317 bills to eradicate new barriers to the ballot box. Since its defeat in the 2020 election, Donald Trump and his Republican allies have pushed the big lie of a stolen election. They have even tried to convince the American people of the lie that noncitizens are voting in large numbers and are threatening our elections.

They are using the lie as an excuse to pass new laws like the SAVE Act that would make it harder for millions of Americans to vote.

Moreover, Donald Trump just signed an executive order that would not only give him unilateral authority to regulate Federal elections, but it would open the floodgates for mass voter purges and give Elon Musk unfettered access to sensitive voter files.

The executive order and the SAVE Act also create unnecessary barriers for election workers by withholding funds and threatening election administrators with a 5-year prison sentence if they make a simple mistake while trying to register new voters.

Even though the 2024 was fair and secure, it was marred with threats of violence, like the bomb threats that targeted polling stations, election offices, and tabulation centers on election day.

However, today's hearing should present a great learning opportunity because States like Connecticut are leading the charge to ex-

pand access to the ballot box. In 2023, Connecticut passed a State-level Voting Rights Act to expand voter access.

Sadly, last year, Alabama, my home State, cared more about enacting laws to criminalize absentee ballot assistance and purged thousands of eligible voters from the rolls. Alabama is one of only three States in the Nation that does not allow any form of early in-person voting.

But in Connecticut, voters were allowed to exercise their right to vote 14 days before election day.

Before election day in Alabama, the courts had to prevent Alabama from unfairly and unlawfully removing thousands of eligible voters from the roll because they were wrongfully flagged as non-citizens in direct violation of the National Voter Registration Act.

Voters in Alabama and every other State should not have fewer options to vote. What they deserve is to learn on election day that their names were actually on the rolls rightfully, not wrongfully, and purged unnecessarily.

As we examine the 2024 election, what we should be addressing are issues such as chronic underfunding of our elections, the safety and security of our election workers, polling stations, and voters, and expanding access to the ballot box for every eligible American.

We should be honoring the legacy by passing legislation like the John Robert Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, the Freedom to Vote Act, and the Native American Voting Rights Act.

Trump has no regards for the U.S. Constitution, the rule of law, or the fundamental principles that all Americans, regardless of their race, creed, or color, has a right to have their voice heard at the ballot box.

The American people's right to vote is sacred, as John Lewis said, and I will never stop fighting to protect the cornerstone of our democracy. We, as elected officials, should be looking for ways to expand access to the ballot box, not to curb it.

I want to thank our secretaries for being here today.

I also want to thank Chair Lee for holding this.

I look forward to hearing from all of you.

I would like to welcome my Secretary of State, Wes Allen.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ranking Member Sewell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS TERRI SEWELL

As a Ranking Member of the Election Subcommittee, and as a representative of Alabama's civil rights district, there is nothing more important to me than ensuring that every American can cast their ballot. It was in my hometown of Selma, Alabama, 60 years ago where John Lewis and hundreds of foot soldiers were bludgeoned on the Edmund Pettus Bridge for the equal right of all Americans to vote. However, for the past decade, extremists have fought to undo the hard won progress that the foot soldiers sought to achieve.

Just last year, lawmakers in 40 States introduced 317 bills to eradicate new barriers to the ballot box. Since its defeat in the 2020 election, Donald Trump and his Republican allies have pushed the big lie of a stolen election. They have even tried to convince the American people of the lie that noncitizens are voting in large numbers and are threatening our elections. They are using the lie as an excuse to pass new laws like the SAVE Act that would make it harder for millions of Americans to vote.

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gates for mass voter purges and give Elon Musk unfettered access to sensitive voter files. The executive order and the SAVE Act also create unnecessary barriers for election workers by withholding funds and threatening election administrators with a 5 year prison sentence if they make a simple mistake while trying to register new voters.

Even though the 2024 was fair and secure, it was marred with threats of violence, like the bomb threats that targeted polling stations, election offices, and tabulation centers on election day. However, today's hearing should present a great learning opportunity because States like Connecticut are leading the charge to expand access to the ballot box. In 2023, Connecticut passed a State-level Voting Rights Act to expand voter access.

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As we examine the 2024 election, what we should be addressing are issues such as chronic underfunding of our elections, the safety and security of our election workers, polling stations, and voters, and expanding access to the ballot box for every eligible American. We should be honoring the legacy by passing legislation like the John Robert Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, the Freedom to Vote Act, and the Native American Voting Rights Act.

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Chair LEE. With that, I yield to Ranking Member of the full Committee, Representative Morelle, for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOSEPH MORELLE, RANKING MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW YORK

Mr. MORELLE. Good afternoon.

Thank you, Chair Lee, for gathering this Subcommittee. Thanks for giving me a few moments.

Certainly, thank you to the various Secretaries of State for being here today.

As we gather this afternoon to revisit the 2024 election, it is important to state up front that the 2024 election was fair and secure, that Donald Trump was elected President. You see, unlike many on the other side of the aisle, Democrats can and will acknowledge that fact. Even when we do not personally like or agree with the outcome of an election, we honor the democratic process and accept the results.

In examining the last election and looking for ways to improve our country's election administration, we must address the rampant spread of mis- and disinformation and falsehoods that continue to be spread about our electoral system. We must protect election workers who face continued threats and harassment.

We must address the rise of artificial intelligence, generative AI, and continued foreign influence campaigns that seek to affect and influence our elections.

We must fully fund our elections. Federal elections are on the ballot in every State every 2 years, and yet Congress has continued and consistently failed to sufficiently fund those election efforts at the State and local level.

Congress must halt and reverse the administration's harmful decisions to attack, undermine, and defund critical Federal agencies and partnerships like the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, CISA, and the Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center, or the FBI's Foreign Influence Task Force.

These actions to cripple and undermine these agencies do not strengthen our elections. In fact, they make us less secure.

We need to fix our broken special interest big money campaign finance system. Last year one donor, billionaire Elon Musk, spent at least \$291 million backing Donald Trump and other Republican candidates. According to Open Secrets, the top six donors in the United States gave over \$100 million each during the 2024 election, all supporting the President and Republican candidates.

In last week's Wisconsin supreme court election, Elon Musk and allied groups spent over \$20 million.

We also need fair maps. Look at North Carolina where Republicans gerrymandered their way into the House majority by drawing three Democratic Members out of their seats.

The President's recent executive order on election integrity is a further assault on our democracy. The order is unlawful and unnecessary, attempting to impose documentary proof of citizenship requirements to register to vote by executive fiat, circumventing the U.S. Congress and our constitutional authority.

It undermines the independence of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, and injects chaos and uncertainty into our voting system certification process.

New York's attorney general and a coalition of 18 other attorneys general are suing to stop President Trump's unconstitutional attempt to seize control of our elections. Voters and party committees have also sued to stop the White House from doing that.

Alongside all of this is the so-called SAVE Act, a measure that my colleagues on the other side claim is necessary to prevent non-citizens from voting in U.S. elections. It is not. Noncitizens registering to vote is already a crime. Noncitizens voting is a crime and leads to immediate deportation. It rarely happens and, when it does, noncitizens are held accountable, as they should be. The SAVE Act and the President's order are two sides of the same coin.

Now with the economic pain of the President's chaotic tariffs just being felt, members of the majority are planning to charge millions of Americans potentially billions of dollars just to register to vote from 150 million Americans who do not have passports.

Last week I testified before the Rules Committee that the SAVE Act and the executive order would disenfranchise women, rural voters, military voters, overseas voters, Native American voters, seniors, students, survivors of domestic abuse, and survivors of natural disasters. Millions of Americans.

There is, however, real work Congress can do to improve our elections. Election officials take on essential, often thankless tasks

in running elections. They face increased threats and too little and inconsistent funding from Congress. That could stop.

As Ranking Member of this Committee and a Member of the Appropriations Committee, I will continue to push for additional funding and consistent elections funding.

We can work to combat mis- and disinformation to meet the challenges posed by AI and to improve access to the ballot for every single American. Providing both support and accurate information will allow election workers to administer secure, accessible elections, and give Americans the confidence in elections that they need.

I was honored to join Ranking Member Sewell in her hometown of Selma for the 60th anniversary of Bloody Sunday just last month. We must honor the legacy and continue moving forward in the fight for voting rights, not backward.

I am anxious to hear from each of the secretaries today. Thank you for your work, for the work your staffs do, and all the election workers in your respective States to carry out these important, important elections.

With that, Madam Chair, thank you for the opportunity. I yield back.

Chair LEE. Without objection, all other Members' opening statements will be made part of the hearing record if they are submitted to the Committee clerk by 5 p.m. today.

At this time, votes for Members have been called. We will take a brief recess to go vote and then return as quickly as possible to the hearing room to hear the opening statements and testimony from our witnesses.

At this time, this Committee stands in a temporary recess.

[Recess.]

Chair LEE. I will now call this hearing back to order and reconvene our business.

Today we have one witness panel, and I will now introduce our witnesses. First, we have Wes Allen, the Secretary of State of Alabama. Next, we have Nancy Landry, the Secretary of State of Louisiana, followed by Frank LaRose, the Secretary of State of Ohio. Then we have Phil McGrane, the Secretary of State of Idaho, and Stephanie Thomas, the Secretary of State of Connecticut.

Each witness will have 3 minutes to provide an opening statement. We thank you for your cooperation and your patience with us in that regard. You have just witnessed what was not an exercise in efficiency. We are so glad to have you all here and to have this time with you.

With that, I now recognize Secretary Allen for the purpose of giving an opening statement.

STATEMENTS OF HON. WES ALLEN, ALABAMA SECRETARY OF STATE; HON. NANCY LANDRY, LOUISIANA SECRETARY OF STATE; HON. FRANK LAROSE, OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE; HON. PHIL MCGRANE, IDAHO SECRETARY OF STATE; AND HON. STEPHANIE THOMAS, CONNECTICUT SECRETARY OF STATE

STATEMENT OF HON. WES ALLEN

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Good afternoon, Members of this Subcommittee. It is my honor to be invited to represent the great State of Alabama as its chief election official.

I bring a unique perspective of today's proceeding, as my career in elections began more than a decade prior to my election as Alabama's 54th Secretary of State when I served for nearly 10 years as probate judge, the chief elections official, in Pike County, Alabama.

The foundation of election integrity is voter file maintenance. Moments after I was sworn in, I signed a letter notifying the Electronic Registration Information Center, also known as ERIC, that Alabama would no longer participate in their program.

My team and I developed and implemented the Alabama Voter Integrity Database, better known as AVID, which utilizes State-to-State data sharing agreements, partners with the driver's license division of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, the national change of address data base, and the Social Security Administration's national death master index to identify individuals who should be placed on a path for removal from our voter file.

Since taking office, more than half a million ineligible voters have been removed from Alabama's voter file. Our voter file, which was a bloated mess on the day I took office, is now the most accurate record of eligible voters our State has ever had.

However, two major hurdles remain. First, the immediate removal of deceased voters from our voter file should be common sense. However, obtaining access to the Social Security Administration's national master death index was absurdly time consuming and overly burdensome.

Unnecessary red tape makes it more difficult than it should be. You, as Members of Congress, can cut through that red tape and make this important data immediately available to all 50 States.

Second, my efforts to gain access to noncitizen data held by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, USCIS, were repeatedly denied by the previous administration.

Fortunately, President Trump's EO directed DHS to cooperate with States to eliminate noncitizens from our voter file, will allow batch comparisons of DHS noncitizen data to our State-level voter files, allowing for the immediate removal of those who are illegally registered to vote.

Granting States immediate access to this data is crucial. Only United States citizens should participate in our elections.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. It has been my honor.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Allen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. WES ALLEN

Good afternoon members of the subcommittee. It is my honor to be invited to represent the Great State of Alabama as its Chief Elections Official.

I bring a unique perspective to today's proceedings, as my career in elections began more than a decade prior to my election as Alabama's 54th Secretary of State, when I served for nearly ten years as Probate Judge, the chief elections official in Pike County, Alabama. That position allows me to view elections with direct knowledge of the administration of elections at both the local and state level. I would impress upon the members of this committee that, although Secretaries are the most visible election officials, many of the most important election functions in Alabama are performed by probate judges, circuit clerks, sheriffs, board of registrars and poll workers who work together with my office to make Alabama's elections system one of the best in the nation.

This perspective motivated my official support for legislation increasing the pay for poll workers, launching programs to assist Probate Judges in

recruiting poll workers and advocating for legislation criminalizing threats to election officials, including poll workers.

In my office, we committed to redirecting federal funds to provide Geographical Information Systems software, GIS, to counties statewide. By making GIS available to county election officials, we achieved a significant improvement in the accuracy of the assignment of voters to the proper precincts, ensuring that each voter receives the proper ballot style when casting their vote.

In Alabama, we have had a strong photo voter ID law on the books for over ten years. We require the use of paper ballots and prohibit the connection of tabulators to the internet. We have also banned ballot harvesting and ranked choice voting. We do not accept any ballot received after election day with the exception of UOCAVA ballots which must be postmarked no later than the date of the election.

I was the state's first Secretary to require a verifiable driver's license or social security number as part of the voter registration process. Upon taking office, we found that more than 340,000 Alabama voters had no verifiable number associated with their voter record. Further, nearly 25,000 of those voters had no number on their record whatsoever. For those without either of these required numbers, sufficient justification is required by sworn affidavit to assign a unique identifier.

The foundation of election integrity is voter file maintenance. Moments after I was sworn in, I signed the letter notifying the Electronic Registration Information Center, also known as ERIC, that Alabama would no longer participate in their program.

My team and I developed and implemented the Alabama Voter Integrity Database, better known as AVID, which utilizes state to state data sharing agreements, partners with the driver license division of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, the National Change of Address Database and the

Social Security Administration's national death master index to identify individuals who should be placed on a path for removal from the voter file.

Since taking office more than half a million ineligible voters have been removed from our state's voter file. Our voter file, which was a bloated mess on the day I took office, is now the most accurate record of eligible voters our state has ever had.

Alabama's 2024 Election Cycle was administered with election integrity as the primary goal and that goal was achieved. Alabamians cast 2,272,911 votes in the November 5, 2024 election.

However, two major hurdles remain.

First, the immediate removal of deceased voters from our voter file should be common sense. However, obtaining access to the Social Security

Administration's National Master Death Index was absurdly time consuming and overly burdensome. Unnecessary red tape makes it more difficult than it should be. You, as members of Congress, can cut through that red tape and make this important data immediately available to all 50 states.

Second, my efforts to gain access to noncitizen data held by the United States Citizenship & Immigration Services, USCIS, were repeatedly denied by the previous administration. Fortunately, President Trump's EO directing DHS to cooperate with states to eliminate non-citizens from our voter file will allow batch comparisons of DHS noncitizen data to our state-level voter files, allowing for the immediate removal of those who are illegally registered to vote. Granting states immediate access to this data is crucial. Only United Citizens should participate in our elections.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today. It has been my honor.

Chair LEE. Thank you.

I now recognize Secretary Landry for the purpose of her opening statement.

STATEMENT OF NANCY LANDRY

Ms. LANDRY. Good afternoon, Chair Lee, Ranking Member Sewell, and Members of this Committee. It is an honor to be with you here today to discuss the successes Louisiana had and the lessons we learned in the 2024 election.

As Louisiana's Secretary of State, the most important function of my job is to reinforce voters' confidence in our elections. I believe our work did just that and led to a banner year in our State's election administration.

Just months after taking office in early 2024, I announced a legislative package of 11 bills intended to strengthen our State's election integrity posture. I am proud to say that all 11 bills passed, eight of those with bipartisan support, and our Governor signed all of them into law.

Last August, I joined Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry and our attorney general to announce new steps our State is taking to ensure that only U.S. citizens can vote in Louisiana elections. This included a directive from the Governor requiring the Office of Motor Vehicles to share information on noncitizens who hold a Louisiana driver's license or ID.

Additionally, in the weeks leading up to the Presidential election, I embarked on a tour that took me to 21 of Louisiana's 64 parishes. I met with civic groups, local election officials and staff, and conducted countless radio and TV interviews to reinforce what I call the four Ps of election security.

Those are our people. That is my staff and our local election officials, the only people that ever program our equipment.

Our policies. The legislation that we have passed over the years to ensure election integrity.

Our procedures. Such as our logic testing and sealing procedures that we conduct before each and every election.

The last P is our physical security. Every machine is stored under lock and key when not in use, and no machine is ever connected to the internet.

While Louisiana has employed these for several years, I felt it was important to meet voters where they are and to empower our local partners with the knowledge that they need to speak with authority on our election processes.

All of that hard work we put in last year resulted in a record-breaking Presidential election. Among other records, we saw the fastest reporting of results in any Presidential election in Louisiana's history. Full, unofficial results were posted within 3 hours of our polls closing.

These efforts led to a noticeable increase in voter confidence in our elections. Over an 8-month period in 2024, a poll found a nine-point jump in the number of voters who believed that our elections are safe and secure.

Louisiana proved that States can make it easy to vote and hard to cheat and that doing so will instill confidence in our elections. I believe every State in the Nation can replicate the strides we

have made. In doing so, they can reassure voters that their elections are safe and secure.

Thank you again for having me. I look forward to your questions.
[The prepared statement of Ms. Landry follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NANCY LANDRY
REMARKS TO THE
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS
Secretary of State Nancy Landry
April 8, 2025

- Good afternoon, Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Sewell, and members of this committee.
- It's an honor to be with you today to discuss the successes Louisiana had, and lessons we learned, in the 2024 election.
- As Louisiana's Secretary of State, the most important function of my job is to reinforce voters' confidence in our elections. I believe our work did just that, and led to a banner year in our state's election administration.
- Just months after taking office in early 2024, I announced a legislative package of 11 bills intended to strengthen our state's election integrity posture.
- These bills closed ballot harvesting loopholes, gave my office necessary tools to ensure accurate voter rolls, and strengthened our ability to verify a registrant's citizenship.
- I'm proud to say that all 11 bills passed, eight of those with bipartisan support, and our governor signed all of them into law.
- Last August, I joined Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry and Attorney General Liz Murrill to announce new steps our state is taking to ensure that only U.S. citizens can vote in Louisiana elections.

- This included a directive from the Governor requiring the Office of Motor Vehicles to share information on non-citizens who hold a Louisiana driver's license or ID.
- The tools they provided have been invaluable in safeguarding the accuracy of our voter registration list.
- Additionally, in the weeks leading up to the presidential election, I embarked on a tour that took me to 21 of Louisiana's 64 parishes.
- I met with civic groups, local election officials and staff, and conducted countless radio and television interviews to reinforce what I call the "4 Ps of Election Security." Those are:
 - Our people: that is my staff and our local election officials, the only people that ever program our equipment.
 - Our policies: the legislation that we've passed over the years to ensure election integrity.
 - Our procedures: such as our test and seal procedures that we conduct before each and every election.
 - And our physical security: every machine is stored under lock and key when not in use, and no machine is ever connected to the internet.
- While Louisiana has employed these for several years, I felt it was important to meet voters where they are and to empower our local partners with the knowledge they need to speak with authority on our election processes.
- All of the hard work we put in last year resulted in a record-breaking presidential election.

- Last year, 42% of voters who participated in the November election cast their vote early in-person; in terms of raw numbers, that was the most ever in our state's history.
- We also saw the fastest reporting of results in any presidential election in Louisiana's history—full, unofficial results were posted within three hours of our polls closing. Not three days, not three weeks—three hours.
- These efforts led to a noticeable increase in voter confidence in our elections.
- Over an eight month period in 2024, a poll found a nine point jump in the number of voters who believed that our elections are safe and secure.
- This work also led to the Heritage Foundation ranking Louisiana second in the nation for election integrity in its latest update.
- Louisiana proved that states can make it easy to vote and hard to cheat, and that doing so will instill confidence in our elections.
- I believe every state in the nation can replicate the strides we have made and, in doing so, they can reassure voters that their elections are safe and secure.
- Thank you again for having me. I look forward to your questions.

Chair LEE. I now recognize Secretary LaRose for the purpose of giving an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF FRANK LAROSE

Mr. LAROSE. Well, thank you so much, Chair Lee and Ranking Member Sewell, all the Members and the staff for inviting us here today.

We had a simple bit of wisdom that we used in the military. That you sweat in training so you do not bleed in battle. It maybe sounds a little bit dramatic. We summed it up a little bit simpler when I was in the Boy Scouts with the slogan be prepared.

The work of elections administration is all about being prepared for that next election. It is a massive logistical undertaking running an election. Sometimes we lose track of that because for each of us individually it is a very individualize experience. You show up at your voting location, check your ballots. You walk out with your "I voted" sticker, and then see the results at the bottom of your screen that night. But it is a massive undertaking.

In Ohio, we created what we call the ready for November task force that started well over a year before the election with training seminars for each of our county boards of elections, working through the after-action reports of previous elections to make sure that those best practice had been put into place, recruiting and training over 35,000 poll workers that it takes to run Ohio's elections, our fifth security directive that built on the four before them to make Ohio a real leader in cybersecurity.

Of course, we run an election day operation center. Some call it our war room where we can quickly work through those issues that inevitably come up on Election Day and make sure that none of them can become a showstopper for the voters of Ohio.

Ohio has implemented a number of best practices that I think are worth considering. Prompt reporting of our election night results. That comes about as a result of pre-processing those absentee ballots as they arrive and making sure that those are ready to be the first ones reported. At 8:15, 8:30 on election night, we are already reporting those early votes and those absentee votes.

One of the other things that we have done in Ohio is standardized our data. Now, to start, we have a bottom-up system in Ohio with each county being run by two Democrats and two Republicans, but we needed to create standardized definitions. We did that through a bipartisan effort called the DATA Act.

Simple things like what constitutes a voter registration date or a ballot cast or a ballot counted. Standardizing all that data, reporting it publicly has made Ohio among the most transparent election systems in the country.

Of course, photo ID, which is widely accepted in Ohio. We provide that for free, and it includes an indication of your citizenship status.

There are things that the Federal Government needs to do. The President took a good first step with the executive order on citizenship data, but we need more access to that through DHS and others, as well as the U.S. Postal Service.

There is a list of things that we as secretaries proposed in September 2024. Many of those still require action.

In 2024, we ran a record-breaking election in Ohio. Voters went to bed on election night, whether their favorite candidates won or lost, knowing that it was an honest result. Ultimately, that is our goal.

I look forward to the questions you all for us later. Thanks.
[The prepared statement of Mr. LaRose follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FRANK LAROSE

OHIO SECRETARY OF STATE FRANK LAROSE
US COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
ELECTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
APRIL 8, 2025

Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Sewell, and members of the House Administration Committee Elections Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to share my insights from the 2024 general election and my thoughts on what we can be doing as elected officials and policymakers to ensure that future elections are secure, accessible, and transparent.

**PREPARATION FOR THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL
ELECTION**

For election officials, presidential general elections are considered our "Super Bowl." Turnout is high, public scrutiny is intense, and the stakes are clear to virtually every American. My office and Ohio's 88 county boards of elections began preparations more than a year out to ensure we could run a secure and honest election. Throughout 2024, we hosted "Ready for November" training seminars for local officials. We provided new tools and resources to ensure layers of redundant security. Administrative protocols were planned and practiced, and new poll workers were recruited and trained, ensuring the democratic process would not be disrupted. Additionally, the Ohio General Assembly approved a \$1 million public service announcement campaign to educate voters on important election dates and deadlines, inform them of voter ID requirements, and communicate information about the security of Ohio's elections. Finally, I issued the fifth Security Directive of my administration to the county boards of elections that built upon the previous directives to ensure cyber and physical security measures were implemented across the state and coordinated with the Ohio Association of Election Officials to conduct an informational seminar for members of the General Assembly.

"Sweat in training so you don't bleed in battle" is a lesson I adopted from my military service. It has become a mantra for our office. We are responsible for a critical mission.

Our elections must be transparent, accurate, secure, and efficient. The results of our tireless preparation for the 2024 election were on full display from the beginning of early voting to the close of polls. Unlike other states that were still counting ballots days and weeks after the election, Ohioans knew the unofficial results shortly after the polls closed. This was accomplished even with 5.8 million Ohioans making their voices heard at the ballot box – the second-highest turnout in our state’s history.

OHIO’S BEST PRACTICES

Ohio has earned a reputation as a “Gold Standard” in election administration because we refuse to rest on our laurels. We are constantly looking for and acting upon process improvements and new ideas to help us ensure it is easy to vote and hard to cheat.

PROMPT REPORTING OF ELECTION RESULTS

Voter confidence in our elections is of national importance. Unlike some states that take days or weeks to report the results of an election, Ohioans know on Election Night who won and who lost. This is because every vote, except for provisional ballots and a few late-arriving absentee ballots, is counted and publicly reported on Election Night.

Ohio law requires bipartisan teams of officials to process—but not tabulate—absentee and early votes ahead of the close of the polls. This gives officials time to verify voters’ eligibility and confirm their identification. It also means the first results reported are early and absentee votes. Next, Election Day votes are tabulated locally, proofed by my team, and publicly reported throughout the evening.

To improve voter confidence nationwide, I recommend that states require secure and bipartisan processing of absentee ballots before Election Day.

STANDARDIZED DATA

Ohio has a “bottom-up” system for elections. The state’s 88 county boards of elections, made up of two Republicans, two Democrats, and equal numbers of Republican and Democratic staff, are responsible for administering elections. Because of this, each county used to have differing definitions of common election data terms. For example, “voter registration date” could mean the date a voter registration form was *received* in one county. In contrast, that same term could mean the date an election official *entered* it into the system in another county. Important terms like “ballots cast” and “ballots counted” had similar issues. Without standardized definitions, public data was inconsistent and difficult to verify independently. To address this issue, I worked with the America First

Policy Institute, Secure Elections, the Bipartisan Policy Center, and MIT to craft legislation that codifies definitions and retention of data. It also allowed for the creation of user-friendly data dashboards that enable the public to inspect a multitude of election data points. This law, the DATA Act, has been used as model legislation in other states. I strongly recommend it as a tool for ensuring transparency and accountability in the election space.

PHOTO ID

An American's right to vote must be protected. As chief election officials, we have the solemn duty to ensure that every eligible U.S. citizen can register and cast a ballot for the candidate or issue of their choice. One of the best ways to protect a voter's voice is by requiring a secure government-issued photo ID to vote. Ohio implemented this requirement, which enjoys broad bipartisan support, in 2023. However, even before the law changed, over ninety-eight percent of voters were presenting a photo ID when appearing at that polling location.

Not only does voter ID help guarantee the principle of "one person, one vote," but it also increases voter confidence, in part because it is a tool that can assist with verifying citizenship. Ohio requires driver's licenses and state identification cards to denote when the card holder is not a US citizen. I was sued prior to the presidential general election over my decision to require individuals who present an ID stating they are a noncitizen to provide additional documentation verifying their naturalization. However, the courts have upheld this commonsense practice.

FEDERAL ACTION

The U.S. Constitution empowers the states to run elections. However, the federal government also has an obligation to assist states by providing the necessary tools to ensure accurate voter registration rolls and the delivery of absentee ballots.

FEDERAL CITIZENSHIP DATA

Only American citizens are permitted to participate in American elections. The Ohio voters enshrined this commonsense notion into our constitution in 2022. As secretary of state, I have conducted the most thorough citizenship review of Ohio's voter rolls in our state's history. We utilize state Bureau of Motor Vehicles data, Social Security Administration data, and the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system to do this. However, the Biden administration refused to provide my office with critical citizenship

data housed at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which clearly violates the law.

Last year, my office filed a lawsuit against DHS. That lawsuit is ongoing, but I hope that with the new administration states will soon be able to proactively verify the citizenship status of every registered voter on their rolls. Congress can assist the states with this effort by requiring federal agencies to make citizenship data available for this purpose, ideally at no cost to the state.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE (USPS) OVERSIGHT

In recent years, USPS has attempted to improve the delivery of election mail. However, further action is needed to ensure voters can confidently use the postal service to request and return their ballots. During the 2024 election season, my office regularly communicated with USPS regional sort facilities that handle Ohio mail. A September memo from the National Association of Secretaries of State addressed to then-Postmaster General Louis DeJoy outlines many of the issues that I and other Secretaries of State would like to see addressed. These items include inconsistent training for USPS staff, exceptionally long delivery times, and mail incorrectly returned as undeliverable. Absentee voting is a convenient option for many Americans. However, improvements must be made to ensure voters are not unintentionally disenfranchised due to government delays or ineptitude.

CONCLUSION

Thank you again for allowing me to testify on the 2024 election, share the best practices Ohio has developed and successfully implemented, and highlight areas in which the federal government can best support election administration. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose

Ohio Secretary of State

Chair LEE. I now recognize Secretary McGrane for the purpose of giving an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF PHIL MCGRANE

Mr. MCGRANE. Chair Lee, Ranking Member Sewell, and Members of the Committee, it really is my privilege to be here before you today.

My background in elections goes back to right when I got out of college. I landed a job as an elections specialist counting ballots when we were voting on punch cards and training poll workers. I have had the unique opportunity to work my way up in a variety of roles along the way.

I can say I have seen just about everything when it comes to elections, and I stand proud to represent the State of Idaho here to really highlight that the 2024 election was one of the most successful in Idaho's history. We had a record 917,000 Idahoans head out to the polls and vote, which really stands out.

I also think, you know, this Committee—I think I came to your attention based on a local election. You mentioned that in your opening statement, Chairwoman, regarding judicial review, right, whenever there is an error. Errors can happen in any election, but the ability to correct those errors, no matter how granular.

We had an election that was determined. It was 47 votes versus 48 votes, and we put that before a judge to make sure that we could get the right result for that community. That is the level of detail that we will use in Idaho to get it right.

Over the 2024 election, I think one of the biggest things that stands out, though, is our use of the SAVE data base and the SAVE tools.

Governor Little and I signed an executive order last summer, the Only Citizens Can Vote Act, to ensure that only American citizens were on our voter rolls headed into the November election. We did a comparison with all the data and had a close working relationship with DHS.

I think one of the telling things and something that you can do about this is we talk about the SAVE data base, or the SAVE program. It is not actually a program or a data base, it is a patchwork of varying data bases that really was never intended for election integrity work.

I think one of the things this Committee can do is invest in the tools that we need as States to ensure that our voter rolls are accurate. I think that is something that all parties should be able to get behind is the accuracy in our voter rolls.

Additionally, I think one other thing that this Committee can take up, and it was already mentioned before, is voter ID. Thirty-six States already have some standard of voter ID. When you look at polling, whether it is Pew or any other resource, it shows heavy bipartisan support.

Most notably, last November, Nevada, and just 2 weeks ago, Wisconsin, the voters, when they get to choose, overwhelmingly choose for identification.

We have the real ID taking effect. We all see this when we travel. All of us experience it. This is something that we can do.

I really look forward to the conversation today in terms of our elections and what Congress can do to help support us as States. Most importantly, I really stand proud of the work that all of the county clerks, the election workers, poll workers, did to make sure that 2024 really was a success, both in Idaho and across our entire country.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[The prepared statement of Mr. McGrane follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PHIL MCGRANE

PHIL McGRANE
IDAHO SECRETARY OF STATE

**TESTIMONY OF PHIL MCGRANE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE STATE OF IDAHO**

**BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS ON
“REVISITING THE 2024 ELECTIONS WITH SECRETARIES OF STATE”**

APRIL 8, 2025

Madam Chair Lee, Ranking Member Sewell, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to participate in today’s hearing. My name is Phil McGrane, and I have the honor of serving as Idaho’s Secretary of State. Before becoming our state’s Chief Election Official, I started in elections the old-fashioned way—counting punch cards and training poll workers back in 2005 as a young election specialist in the Boise area. Since then, I’ve clerked for the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and served as both Chief Deputy and then the elected County Clerk for Idaho’s largest county. Nearly two decades later, I’m still in this work because I believe deeply in the integrity of our democracy and the people who make it function.

Judicial Review

I became known to this subcommittee through an Idaho law that I wrote allowing for [judicial review of elections](#). This law was used in 2023 for a school board race in Jerome County, where two voters residing in the same household were issued absentee ballots for the incorrect school board zone. When the votes were counted, a difference of one vote between the two candidates was found. Due to potential consequences for the election results, the Jerome County clerk petitioned the district court for a judicial review of the election to determine the appropriate course of action. The judge ordered a new election to be held for the race. This is the extent to which my state and I are willing to go to ensure the will of the people is accurately reflected in election outcomes.

2024 Election Look Back

I'm proud to report that the 2024 general election was the most successful in Idaho's history. A record 917,000 Idahoans voted. More than that number alone, voters used every available method to cast their ballot. While most chose to vote in person on Election Day, for the first time ever, more Idahoans voted early in person than by absentee ballot.

And perhaps most remarkably: for the first time in recent memory, not a single race—*not even the most local contest*—required a recount or was legally challenged. That's a testament to the preparation, collaboration, and integrity of our entire elections team statewide.

Idaho's Commitment to Easy, Accurate, and Secure Elections

One highlight I'm especially proud of was the state and county joint commitment to voters. In September 2024, all 44 of Idaho's county clerks joined me on the Capitol steps to sign an [open letter](#) to Idaho voters pledging transparency, security, and trust in the process. Together, we shared our [12 Principles for a Successful Election](#), emphasizing that voting should be Easy, Accurate, and Secure. Communicating these principles, which are uniformly practiced across the state of Idaho, gave Idaho voters piece of mind that regardless of where they cast their vote, their vote would be counted accurately and securely.

Idaho's model proves those values can coexist—we don't have to choose between access and security. We can and *must* have both.

Voter Validation

Our success also extended to safeguarding voter eligibility. Last summer, Governor Brad Little issued an executive order—the Only Citizens Can Vote Act—tasking our office with ensuring that only eligible citizens were on Idaho's voter rolls. I'm proud to say we built a strong partnership with the Idaho Transportation Department, the State Police, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to make that happen. Starting from a voter list of over 1.1 million voters, we were able to discern that 34 individuals on the voter rolls were indeed non-citizens. While not enough to influence the outcome of an election, we have taken our role seriously in not only removing those individuals and ensuring that they did not vote in the 2024 elections but also working with local, state, and federal law enforcement for investigation and prosecution.

Recommendations

Validating Voters

I am hopeful that today's hearing can be a conversation about how Congress can partner with my peers and me to strengthen voting across the U.S. There is a lot of discussion—through the SAVE Act, President Trump's recent Executive Order, and elsewhere—about validating voter citizenship using DHS's SAVE system. But the reality is that the SAVE system is not a database. It is a patchwork of records from various immigration systems, never designed for election integrity work. DHS made that clear during a recent presentation to the National Association of Secretaries of State.

If Congress truly wants to maintain accurate voter rolls and verify citizenship as much as I do, then I implore you to invest in building the tools to do so. DHS cannot meet these expectations with the system as it stands.

Standardized Photo ID Requirement

My second recommendation is something Congress *can* achieve—something the American people broadly support: a standardized photo ID requirement for voting. Poll after poll shows bipartisan support. A [Gallup poll in 2024](#) showed 84% favor "requiring all voters to provide photo identification at their voting place in order to vote." Interestingly, support was 5 points higher than it was in the [same survey in 2022](#). Similarly, [Pew Research in 2024](#) showed that 81% favor "requiring all voters to show government-issued photo identification to vote." Finally, [Monmouth University in 2021](#) found that 80% favor "requiring voters to show photo identification in order to cast a ballot."

But even more telling is what happens when voters themselves decide. Last week in [Wisconsin](#) and last November in [Nevada](#), voters overwhelmingly passed constitutional amendments requiring photo ID to vote.

In fact, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, [36 states](#) already ask for or require voter ID. I believe Congress can come together on this. A national photo ID standard that includes free IDs for those who need them would go a long way toward bolstering public confidence in elections nationwide.

Madam Chair Lee, thank you and the subcommittee for the opportunity to testify. I sit before you not just as an official, but as someone deeply proud of the tireless work of our clerks, election staff, poll workers, and volunteers. They are the backbone of American democracy—and they deserve our gratitude, trust, and support.

I look forward to your questions.

Chair LEE. I now recognize Secretary Thomas for the purpose of giving an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE THOMAS

Ms. THOMAS. Good afternoon to all the Members of the Committee.

It is a true honor to be here today to reflect on an incredible year for the great State of Connecticut, home of the UConn Huskies.

At a time when election mistrust was in the headlines, Connecticut expanded our voting access while maintaining voters' trust. We submitted more than 20 pages of written testimony, extremely long, I know, but I hope others can learn from us as we made voting more accessible while maintaining security.

Like most States, we faced many challenges in 2024. The introduction of early voting, skittish election workers, a potential poll workers shortage, and a proliferation of false claims about election integrity.

We have been at this a long time. Connecticut is known as the Constitution State, because ours is the first written Constitution in America dating back to 1639.

We are also known as the land of steady habits due to our thoughtful approach. We have always used paper ballots, we have never used equipment connected to the internet. We audit regularly. We perform robust list maintenance. We require certification and continuing education for our election workers, and more.

Today, I want to focus on several of the elements that helped our elections run smoothly, even as 40 percent of our voters switched to early voting for the first time.

First, we took a very collaborative approach, hosting monthly meetings beginning in 2023 with members of our election workforce and our fusion center partners. This enabled us to create trainings, as we needed to keep everyone in lockstep.

For example, police did not know what they should do at a polling location. Election workers created a training for them. Our election workers were not sure what to do in certain emergencies. Law enforcement created scenario-planning drills for them.

Second, we visited over 100 groups to teach them how early voting would work, and we recruited over 250 businesses and organizations to join our CEO program, which stands for Civically Engaged Organizations.

Third, because we do not have a county form of government, each town administers its own elections run by an elected Republican and Democrat, which helped keep our elections fair and transparent.

Last, we have an investigatory agency that any individual can report any claims of election malfeasance. We have volunteer attorneys who also are deployed on Election Day if needed.

Our team felt great coming out of 2024, but my message to Congress today is simple: We do not need complicated mandates for what States are already doing well. I believe we need to focus on continual funding, education, recruitment, and global security.

Thank you so much for listening today. I know we had to adjust our minutes downward by two. I hope I will receive some questions.

Thank you.
[The prepared statement of Ms. Thomas follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE THOMAS

Testimony of
Connecticut Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas
Before the Subcommittee on Elections
of the Committee on House Administration
April 8, 2025



Connecticut, the Constitution State

*A Supporter of State Sovereignty
and Strong Elections from the Start*



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Stephanie Thomas
 Secretary of the State

Jennifer D. Barahona
 Deputy Secretary of the State

Dear Subcommittee on Elections of the Committee on House Administration Chairwoman Lee, Ranking Member Sewell, and distinguished committee members Johnson, Loudermilk, Murphy, and Miller. I am privileged to submit this written testimony and to have the opportunity to speak before you.

The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy—an inalienable right that must be both accessible and secure. In 2024, Connecticut reinforced this principle with its first-ever early in-person voting period, giving voters 14 days of additional opportunities to cast their ballots. The success of this initiative was no accident; it was the result of Connecticut's long history of expanding voter access while maintaining the highest standards of election security. From the Fundamental Orders of 1639 to modern innovations in election administration, our state has continuously prioritized engagement, integrity, and inclusivity in its democratic processes.

Central to this success is the partnership between the Secretary of the State's Office and Connecticut's 169 municipalities, ensuring elections are conducted with efficiency, bi-partisan transparency, and security. This collaboration extends beyond just facilitating voting—it also includes efforts to educate and inspire civic engagement at all levels.

Despite these successes, recent federal proposals threaten to disrupt our well-established systems. The SAVE Act and the "Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections" presidential order impose costly, unnecessary, and restrictive federal mandates that would disrupt our state's robust and finely tuned election infrastructure. Rather than imposing these burdens, Congress and the White House should look to aspects of Connecticut's careful and secure approach as a model, rather than an obstacle.

Connecticut's Fundamental Orders of 1639: America's Foundation of Self-Governance

The first written constitution in the American colonies, Connecticut's Fundamental Orders of 1639 established a system of representative government where leaders were elected by the majority; government powers were distributed to create a system of checks and balances; and towns maintained control over local decisions while operating within the Connecticut Colony's unified government.

Among the people strongly influenced by this document was Roger Sherman, one of Connecticut's and America's Founding Fathers. One of the five primary authors of the Declaration of Independence, Sherman in 1777 also helped draft, and was one of the signers of, the Articles of Confederation, which united America's first 13 states and served as our nation's first frame of government during the American Revolution.

Sherman was a strong advocate for state sovereignty with a limited central government, which the Articles of Confederation established. But like many of our country's founders, he quickly recognized weaknesses in the Articles that needed to be changed.

To help correct those weaknesses, he became one of Connecticut's delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia to help write the U.S. Constitution. By then, **Connecticut's Fundamental Orders had successfully been in place for almost 150 years, giving Sherman the opportunity to demonstrate to fellow delegates how a working representative government could function in America.**

The Convention consisted of four months of impassioned, rigorous debate, but also much compromise. However, one thing neither Connecticut's delegates nor the majority of others would compromise on was a change to voting rights.

Fearful of creating a government with the potential to become as powerful and tyrannical as the British monarchy they just fought to free themselves of, they retained the same emphasis on state sovereignty within the Constitution that they established in the Articles of Confederation to ensure states maintained control over critical areas like taxation, law enforcement, governance, and voting. Said Sherman in a letter handwritten in December 1787 to "A Citizen of New Haven":

One excellency of the Constitution is that when the government of the United States acts within its proper bounds, it will be the interest of the legislatures of the particular

States to support it, but when it over leaps those bounds and interferes with the rights of the State governments, it will be their interest powerful enough to check it; but the powers of each distinction between their jurisdictions will be So obvious, that there will be no great danger of interference or contention between the governments of the particular States & the United States.

The new U.S. Constitution he and his colleagues helped create safely ensured voting laws and processes would be regulated by those best suited to do so: the states themselves, whose leaders' intimate knowledge of their populations' needs and values were best and most appropriately suited for the task, and whose oversight of election law would best protect individual liberties.

Expansion of Safe, Secure Voting in Connecticut

Today, 238 years after the Constitution was signed, Connecticut is still committed to improving our democracy, and toward that end recently adopted a series of reforms focused on building a more accessible and secure voting system. Long known as the "Land of Steady Habits" for its deliberate approach to governance and reform, state leaders and voters carefully considered and passed legislation implementing best practices across the board, while also considering our decentralized collaborative where local governments play a central role.

The most significant and recent reforms have included the adoption of early in-person voting, approved by voters by constitutional amendment in 2022 and same-day registration during the early voting period. The rollout of these reforms provides an effective model of how **deliberate, thoughtful change can improve the electoral process, as well as how reforms can be tailored to integrate with a state's already robust institutions and infrastructure.**

Implementation of Early Voting in November 2024

“ In November 2024, 1.79 million Connecticut electors cast a ballot, resulting in an overall 76% turnout. More than 740,000 voters – representing roughly 41% of the electorate – cast their ballot during our 14-day early voting period. ”

To implement early in-person voting for the November 2024 election, the Secretary of the State adopted a proactive approach to provide municipalities with as much information and support as possible.

Collaborative approach to creation of training materials. The agency prepared detailed training manuals and presented a draft to every registrar and town clerk in the state to solicit feedback. We received over fifty pages of notes. As a result of viewing every comment, we were able to close potential loopholes and tighten security and chain-of-custody procedures, creating a better system.

Established a baseline across all jurisdictions through the creation of universal forms, weekly updated FAQs, and other support materials to ensure that every municipality, regardless of size, achieved the same baseline information, education, and materials.

Comprehensive online learning management system created for moderators and poll workers, as well as webinars, and an extensive training program in partnership with the University of Connecticut.

Spot training for our decentralized election workforce. As many registrars work part time (for some of the small, rural towns, barely a few hours a month), we provided multiple online and in-person office hours to answer remaining questions and ensure officials understood and were ready for the new procedures.

Real time support for election workers. During the early voting period, Office of the Secretary of the State attorneys, election officers, IT staff, and top officials were available on Zoom to respond to inquiries and provide support in real time. As the voting progressed, the agency offered a dedicated phone line to respond to inquiries.

Real time hotline for the public. In addition to an extensive public education campaign, detailed in a later section of this document, the state encourages real time intervention by offering a dedicated help line where callers with concerns or questions about elections are connected to attorneys and elections officers at the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC), our elections investigative agency.

Additionally, our agency and SEEC officials meet two times per day during early voting and more frequently on Election Day to discuss and address any issues affecting voting access or election security.

Updated technology. To accommodate early voting, the Secretary of the State's IT department had to make changes to its Centralized Voter Registration System (CVRS). This change made it possible for local officials to check in voters in real time, ensuring they had not voted at a different early voting location or cast an absentee ballot. This provided both election officials and voters with confidence in the overall system.

Thanks to these efforts, early voting was a major success.

Connecticut's Robust Election Infrastructure

This success with early voting, however, could only be achieved thanks to an already existing strong, robust voting infrastructure that included:

Paper ballots. Connecticut state law mandates that all 169 municipalities use paper ballots, ensuring a verifiable paper trail. This in turn ensures for accurate audits and recounts, enhancing election integrity.

Secure voting machines with no internet connection. Our voting machines are not connected to the internet, significantly reducing the risk of electronic intrusions or interference.

Stringent pre-election testing. Before every election, registrars of voters conduct rigorous logic and accuracy testing on all voting machines to confirm proper ballot coding and vote tabulation.

Emergency contingency planning. Connecticut State Law already required every municipality to have an emergency plan for elections. But with the addition of early voting, Connecticut had to move from one day of voting to fourteen days of voting, which raised new potential issues. Registrars of voters and town clerks participated in a first-of-its kind Emergency Preparedness Exercise in 2024, along with our Fusion Center, to help develop emergency contingency plans to address potential disruptions. These plans outlined strategies for managing situations such as (1) shortages or absences of poll workers; (2) power outages; (3) voting machine malfunctions; (4) severe weather or natural disasters; and (5) security concerns or disturbances at polling places. On the rare occasion when election officials faced one of these issues, everyone involved had guidelines and procedures in place to respond effectively.

Bipartisan oversight. Every polling place is staffed by bipartisan teams from the administrators to check-in clerks to the ballot distributors. Every official takes an oath to uphold state election laws and work together to ensure a secure, fair, and transparent electoral process.

Post-election audits. Audits of at least 5% of the state's voting districts (i.e., polling locations) are required after every federal, state, or municipal regular election or primary. They compare a portion of the paper ballots cast by voters with the results produced by a voting machine. These locations are selected at random by our office and conducted by registrars of voters.

Transparency and public observation. Transparency has always been a core principle of Connecticut's election process. Members of the public are welcome to observe election procedures, including absentee ballot counting, post-election audits, and recounts in close contests.

Election enforcement and fraud prevention. Connecticut maintains a dedicated election enforcement agency, the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC). Staffed by experienced nonpartisan professionals, SEEC investigates reports of election fraud or irregularities and refers cases for prosecution when warranted.

Early intervention during elections. Our office also runs the Secretary's Legal Assistance Program. This project, formed by The Connecticut Bar Association and the Secretary of the State, trains volunteer attorneys to assist the Secretary of the State by serving in person at a polling place or agreeing to be on call to respond to problems during early voting or on Election Day.

Extensive security training and collaboration. State agencies have always provided extensive information technology training, support, and resources to ensure that election processes are safe for any malignant intrusion. Election officials are in regular contact and have relationships with partners in federal and state government, who assist with cyber and physical security, share information, and help plan for election events and respond to incidents. We provide a more detailed overview of these joint efforts below.

Election monitor program. To further improve election security, the legislature created a procedure to appoint election monitors in districts where additional oversight might be required, providing additional guidance to local election authorities. In all cases, **the focus has been to relentlessly target fraud, avoiding broad, unfocused solutions** that might potentially disenfranchise eligible voters by creating unreasonable barriers or requirements to cast a ballot.

List Maintenance. Connecticut dedicates considerable resources to keeping its voter registration file up to date. Registrars of voters regularly update records when they receive notifications of new registrations, address changes, or deaths. They also conduct an annual list maintenance canvass of voters. Our office also regularly cross-checks its voter list to find possible duplicates and coordinates with the state's jury administration records to verify voter information.

The state is a member of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), a multi-state partnership designed to improve the accuracy of voter registration records and increase access to voter registration. We utilize the cross-state movers, in-state movers, the deceased, and duplicate reports offered through ERIC. By leveraging data from multiple sources, including the Social Security Administration's Limited Access Death Master File and the U.S. Postal Service's National Change of Address system, ERIC helps Connecticut keep its voter rolls up to date.

Impact of the Elections Executive Order and the SAVE Act

Thanks to Connecticut's Founding Fathers, we have long been a leader in conducting secure, accessible, and fair elections. As outlined in this testimony, our election system has been carefully designed to balance security and accessibility, ensuring that every eligible voter can cast their ballot safely and efficiently. However, recent federal efforts through the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act and presidential order "Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections" would shift key aspects of election oversight from the state to federal government, introducing new regulations that could disrupt Connecticut's well-established election process and have the exact opposite effect than intended.

Unfunded Mandates Strain Part-Time Workforce, Threatening Security. Connecticut does not have a county form of government, requiring an election system that operates at the municipal level. In our decentralized system, each of our 169 municipalities administers its own elections. In these towns and cities, election-related services are conducted by one Republican and one Democrat registrar of voters and absentee ballots are handled by a town clerk. All but a couple of these positions are elected and only 17 municipalities have full-time registrars. The remainder work varying hours, as few as one hour a week or by appointment only. **Although our structure makes election administration in Connecticut both bipartisan and collaborative, it is difficult to absorb time-intensive mandates.**

Unlike states with centralized county election offices, each town funds their own elections. Voter registrations are administered by local personnel, often operating with lean budgets and part-time staff, with limited capacity to process large volumes of applications.

Database Requirements, a Further Strain on the System. Changes also include an unfunded mandate that would require each of Connecticut's 169 municipalities to cross-check and verify voter registration information against federal databases — another requirement our towns and cities do not have the staffing or finances to do. The costs associated with database access, training, and new voter registration forms shipped to 169 towns would be substantial. Towns would need to restructure voter registration staffing, relying on less knowledgeable workers potentially leading to errors. Additionally, towns

would have to allocate funds for training, reducing resources available for other crucial areas such as registrar continuing education, poll worker training, and voter outreach.

Voter Registration Rolls Put at Risk. Requiring every municipality to access federal databases raises concerns about maintaining the integrity of Connecticut’s voter file, which has long been safeguarded through controlled, limited access. Currently, access is strictly limited—only designated personnel can modify and add data, ensuring that voter records remain secure and accurate. To meet federal requirements, lower-level, newly hired staff—who may not have the expertise to properly navigate these databases—would be granted access to highly sensitive voter information. This not only increases the risk of mistakes in voter records but also creates vulnerabilities that could be exploited, whether through human error, cyber threats, or potential misuse of data. Compounding this security issue is a practical one. The software Connecticut uses for its voter files lacks the fields needed to input citizenship data, because non-citizens are already prohibited from registering.

In-Person Requirement Disenfranchises Voters. Beyond logistics, the SAVE Act would actively disenfranchise key groups of Connecticut voters. Our state is home to many active-duty members of the U.S. Navy’s submarine force. These servicemembers are often deployed with little notice on underwater exercises, where they lack access to mail and the internet for months at a time. Requiring these young service members to submit a passport in order to register to vote would strip them of their right to vote while they are actively defending our nation. Similarly, incarcerated individuals who retain their voting rights, inpatient residents of mental health facilities, and elderly voters in long-term care homes often lack the necessary documentation or ability to physically appear at registrar offices.

Furthermore, requiring in-person registration discriminates against voters with disabilities who may not have reliable transportation to reach municipal offices during limited hours. Connecticut has always prioritized accessibility in its elections, and these restrictions run counter to our state’s commitment to ensuring every eligible voter has a voice.

Citizenship Documentation Sets Up Election Workers for Failure. Currently, our registrars of voters are trained to recognize our "drive-only" licenses which cannot be used to register, and to identify potential inconsistencies in registration paperwork, but they are not trained to authenticate the wide range of documents the SAVE Act would require, such as birth certificates, divorce decrees, and marriage licenses. Without specialized training, election workers—many of whom serve in part-time or seasonal roles—would be more prone to errors in determining voter eligibility. Even experienced registrars would struggle to accurately assess unfamiliar documents, leading to a less secure voter verification system.

Imposing an unnecessary, complex, and inconsistently applied documentation requirement would not strengthen our elections—it would only serve to disenfranchise eligible voters and overburden local election offices.

Connecticut Already Meets or Exceeds Federal Election Security Standards.

Connecticut already ensures the integrity of our elections through rigorous list maintenance, strict adherence to the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and the Voting Rights Act (VRA), as well as with the exclusive use of paper ballots with no internet connectivity in any part of the voting process. Additionally, our state law prohibits foreign money from influencing elections and ballot initiatives, reinforcing our commitment to fair and transparent electoral practices.

Rather than imposing one-size-fits-all federal rules, the federal government should recognize Connecticut’s success in securing elections while maintaining accessibility. The new or proposed federal requirements would not only disrupt our system but would potentially disenfranchise thousands of voters, particularly those who already face barriers to participation. Connecticut has demonstrated that election security and voter accessibility are not mutually exclusive. We urge policymakers to respect state sovereignty and protect the rights of all voters, which for Connecticut neither the SAVE Act nor presidential order do.

**Robust Elections Require a Robust
State-Local-Federal Partnership**

A robust election system is not the work of any single entity. It is a partnership between the state, municipalities, and the federal government. When this balance is respected, elections run smoothly, with policies tailored to local needs while still maintaining national standards of security.

Strong Local Influence. Strong, bi-partisan local control allows elections to be administered by individuals who understand their communities, ensuring that voting processes align with local needs within the confines of federal and state law. Meanwhile, the Secretary of the State’s Office provides essential training, security infrastructure, and guidance, helping towns navigate the complexities of election law and emerging cybersecurity threats. This decentralized, collaborative approach ensures that elections remain accessible, transparent, and free from undue partisan influence.

State Support Aids Local Efforts. A key example of this successful partnership is the cybersecurity protections provided by the state to safeguard voter registration and election infrastructure. Connecticut's Voter Registration System (CVRS) is not exposed to the internet, minimizing the risk of cyberattacks. Instead, municipalities access it through a secure private network, preventing unauthorized access. Also, to further bolster security, the state:

- **Provides election officials with monthly SANS Online Security Awareness Training.** This partnership, funded by federal grants, allows us to share new modules with registrars and town clerks each month, equipping them and their staff with the knowledge to recognize and mitigate cybersecurity threats. Without this support, each municipality would have to stand up its own training.
- **Monitors network traffic for potential threats.** Advanced monitoring tools include three Albert Sensors that track and analyze network traffic for potential security breaches, with one dedicated to the CVRS network.
- **Utilizes the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center (MS-ISAC) to provide municipalities with critical threat intel, security education, and election security alerts.** Through our partnership, the MS-ISAC provides election security alerts, incident response services, endpoint detection and response tools, webinars, and trainings free to underserved municipalities.
- **Works with the Connecticut Military Department (CTMD) Cyber Division to perform cyber security assessments of each of the state's 169 municipalities.** Through this partnership, the CTMD developed a "SOTS Municipal Elections Security Best Practices" guide based on federal best practice standards. Each municipality was also given the choice to receive an on-site IT election infrastructure risk assessment visit from the CTMD. All but 11 municipalities participated.

Federal Assistance Essential for Municipalities. While elections remain fundamentally a state and local responsibility, voluntary partnerships with the federal government play a crucial role in safeguarding the integrity of our electoral process. The ability for states to collaborate with federal agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), provides valuable resources that enhance election security without infringing upon state sovereignty. In Connecticut, these voluntary federal partnerships have been instrumental in helping municipalities defend against ever-evolving cybersecurity threats while maintaining full control over election administration.

- **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)**. One of the most valuable contributions of the federal government has come through the CISA, which has provided a range of essential services to state and local election officials to help them strengthen their digital defenses, ensuring voter registration databases and election systems remain secure from cyberattacks. Additionally, CISA conducts physical security assessments that aid local election officials in identifying vulnerabilities in polling places and election offices, allowing for proactive measures to be taken to protect these critical facilities.
- **The Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC)** has also been an indispensable resource, allowing officials to stay informed about emerging cyber threats occurring in other jurisdictions. By having real-time awareness of potential risks, Connecticut election administrators can take swift action to mitigate threats before they impact the state's electoral process. This type of proactive intelligence-sharing enhances overall election security while preserving the decentralized nature of election administration.
- **Economies of Scale.** Beyond intelligence and security assessments, CISA has also provided invaluable training opportunities, including incident response planning resources and tabletop exercises designed to prepare state and local officials for various threats. When our election workforce expressed safety concerns in 2024, CISA was able to conduct two de-escalation in-person training session which put them at ease.
- **Global Threat Monitoring.** The federal government's role in election security extends beyond technical assistance to include intelligence briefings, both classified and unclassified, that provide election officials with a clearer understanding of foreign threats to our electoral systems. This high-level information allows states like Connecticut to implement security strategies that counteract foreign interference while maintaining the integrity and independence of our election processes — something that, despite a dismantling of CISA — we hope will continue.

Ultimately, these voluntary partnerships with the federal government strengthen state and municipal election systems while respecting the principles of state sovereignty.

Civic Engagement & Empowerment

While changes to election laws and reforms are critical to ensuring a fair democratic process, they are only effective if citizens are informed and actively engaged in shaping the future of their communities. In a nation built on the principle of government by the people, it is essential that every citizen feels empowered to participate in shaping the decisions that impact their lives. Civic engagement is not just a right; it is a responsibility, and it starts with civic literacy.

Our work over the past two years has focused on fostering civic education and engagement in communities across Connecticut, with particular

Please see Appendix for more on our civics programs.

emphasis on building trust, combating misinformation, and providing tools that help people become informed, engaged citizens. Our initiatives—whether they involve direct outreach to community groups, providing clear and accessible information about voting and civic participation, or leveraging the power of partnerships—are all driven by one goal: to increase **civic participation** and **empower individuals to make informed decisions**.

Our goals are to equip people with the knowledge they need to participate in the democratic process with confidence. I am proud to share the strides we have made in this effort, which are grounded in our commitment to serving as a trusted messenger and a resource for all residents.

Building Trust Through Direct Engagement. In 2023, we committed ourselves to meeting with as many community groups, leaders, and organizations as possible. We reached out to over **150 groups**, including chambers of commerce, foundations, businesses, universities, state representatives, and a wide array of community groups, nonprofits, and advocates. Our goal was simple: to listen. By proactively meeting with these groups, we aimed not only to understand the challenges they face but also to learn how we could best assist in overcoming them. This was an essential first step in building trust and forming meaningful, productive partnerships.

Cultivating Civic Literacy. In our work, we've placed a strong emphasis on civic literacy—ensuring that citizens have the information they need to make informed decisions and participate in the democratic process. One of the ways we've done this is by creating **Civics 101**, an accessible online platform designed to educate residents on the basics of voting, elections, and civic responsibilities. Our dedicated website, Civics101.ct.gov, simplifies

complex legal and electoral jargon into plain language, making these resources easy to understand and share.

- Our team has also designed downloadable, printable handouts—available in multiple languages including Spanish, Hindi, French, and Haitian Creole—that provide clear, concise information about voter registration, voting processes, and deadlines. These materials are complemented by videos, social media graphics, and even tabletop signs to ensure that information is reaching as many people as possible in an accessible way.
- The **Power of Civics** is a key component of our Civics 101 program, where we have curated dozens of actions individuals can take—beyond voting—to educate themselves and engage year-round.
- Our **Civically Engagement Organization (CEO)** program works with businesses, nonprofits, and religious organizations to serve as trusted messengers to their respective communities. Through this program, these partners gain access to a toolkit of trusted, factual resources—ranging from social media graphics to educational videos—that help them engage with their communities in a nonpartisan, informative manner. Each organization utilizes the tools in a manner that works for them. A newspaper participant created a voter guide for their town, our WNBA team made social media videos, and a corporation held a lunch and learn for their employees.

Recognizing Poll Workers, Municipalities, & Grassroots Engagement. Another critical aspect of our work is recognizing and appreciating those who make elections run smoothly—our poll workers.

- We hold **Poll Worker Appreciation** events in towns and cities all over Connecticut to publicly acknowledge their hard work and dedication, shining a light on their essential role in the democratic process. By celebrating their efforts, we help foster respect for the election process and encourage others to consider contributing their time and skills as poll workers. In 2024, over 3,300 individuals completed the poll worker interest form on our website.
- Our annual **Democracy Cup** bestows an award each year to municipalities with the highest voter turnout. Each community awarded the Democracy Cup is able to host and display a trophy.

- We also made it a priority to **engage directly with communities regardless of political party or location**, rarely turning down invitations to attend or speak at events, whether they be town hall meetings, local fairs, or community event.

Youth Engagement & Education.

- One of our most exciting initiatives over the past year has been the **Next Gen Elections** program, made possible by a Help American Vote College Program grant from the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission. This program is designed to engage young people in the electoral process by offering paid training for college students to become poll workers. These students, mentored by registrars of voters, are trained as moderators and placed in voting locations throughout the state. Our first cohort of 40 students served at the polls a combined total of over 800 hours and in a post-election survey, cited that they would be 80% more likely to continue participating in elections following their experience in the program.
- As part of our continued efforts to engage and empower the next generation of civic leaders, our office partners with colleges and universities across Connecticut to provide **internship opportunities** in areas such as policy research, outreach, and graphic design. These internships offer students the chance to generate fresh ideas and take the lead on projects, such as our most recent initiative, VOICE CT.
- **VOICE CT—Voicing Our Ideas for Civic Engagement in Connecticut.** This new college intern-led initiative is designed to give high school students across Connecticut the opportunity to shape their own civic life with assistance from our office. Students are invited to share their unique ideas and perspectives on how public officials and government agencies can better encourage youth participation in civic life. Through VOICE CT, our office aims to listen—to learn from students about what actions, resources, and messages would inspire greater youth involvement in civic activities.
- We also focused our efforts on **National Voter Registration Day**, partnering with colleges and universities across Connecticut to raise awareness and reduce confusion around how to register and vote while in college. Through campus events, a dedicated press conference, and an online toolkit, tailored specifically to college students, the program addressed the unique challenges they face in navigating the registration process.

Conclusion

Elections must reflect the needs and values of the people they serve, which is why states must retain the authority to oversee and manage their own electoral processes.

Connecticut's success in expanding voter participation, while maintaining the integrity of its elections, demonstrates that state-led innovation is key to strengthening democracy.

I am honored to have had the opportunity to submit this testimony. Collaboration plays a vital role in the success of elections. Our democracy is a collaborative responsibility, and we all benefit when we share ideas. As we continue to work together for the strongest democracy possible, I urge Congress to uphold the fundamental right of every eligible American to vote, and to uphold the fundamental right of every state to run elections without unnecessary barriers.

Appendix

Activity	Description	Reach
CIVICS 101	Plain-language handouts designed to be easily downloaded from Civics101.ct.gov.	Used statewide by schools, municipal government offices, community groups, and more.
 Civics Trivia	Members receive access to an online toolkit with resources to spread the word in their communities.	Includes over 250 businesses, non-profits, religious entities, and towns.
 ConneCT & Cut	Secretary Thomas visits barbershops and hair salons for a haircut and discussion about civics.	Hosted at libraries, Boys & Girls Clubs, and other community organizations.
 Lawn Signs	People design their own nonpartisan messages on painted-over lawn signs at fairs and festivals.	Videos are posted on social media to spread the message.
 Poll Worker Appreciation Events	People design their own nonpartisan messages on painted-over lawn signs at fairs and festivals.	Over 200 signs deployed each year!
 National Voter Registration Day	Celebrates the hard work of poll workers to recruit and build trust in communities.	Over 400 citations awarded for 10+ years of service to poll workers in 23 towns.
 NEXTGEN ELECTIONS	NVRD efforts on college campuses to address unique challenges of voting when away from home.	Partnered with over 20 campuses across the state.
 The Power of Civics	Trains the next generation of senior election workers.	60 students representing over 15 CT colleges and universities.
 Voter Education in Prisons	PowerofCivics.ct.gov outlines ways for anyone to get civically engaged.	Used statewide by schools, community groups, and more.
 VOICE CT	Civics education materials on inmate tablets and voter registration events.	All 13 facilities in CT.
 VOICE CT	Voicing Our Ideas for Civic Engagement in CT – program for high school students.	Over 60 respondents in our first cycle.

Chair LEE. Thank you.

I will begin our questions today, followed by the Ranking Member.

I now recognize myself for the purpose of questioning our witnesses.

Secretary Allen, I will start with you and follow up on your testimony that related to your efforts to have accurate and contemporary voter rolls.

Under your leadership, the Alabama Voter Integrity Database system entered into a memorandum of understanding with my home State of Florida through 2027. Can you share with us what that is and why it is so crucial to have States communicate with each other about voter rolls?

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

It is vitally important that States talk to each other. We have been so very, very proud of these memorandums of understanding, not only with the State of Florida, but with Georgia and Tennessee and Mississippi and Louisiana, Arkansas, Kentucky, and most recently, Texas.

Those are vitally important to have a bilateral agreement to where we can get our IT departments to talk to each other to make sure that we do not have anyone that is double registered in both States. We are very, very proud of this effort.

We have exchanged data with a number of States so far, and we found over 40,000 individuals that were double-registered in other States as well as Alabama.

Chair LEE. Tell us what sort of adjudication process occurs when do you identify somebody who appears to be registered in more than one location.

Mr. ALLEN. We get that information, and we send out to the counties, to the different boards of registrars where that person was last registered in Alabama. They send out correspondence to this person to let them know that there may be some question about their voter registration, and if they, indeed, have moved to another State, to call them back or to correspond with them and to remove themselves from the Alabama voter file.

If they do not correspond with us, there is a time period in conjunction with the NVRA that places them on a pathway to removal. We do not remove them instantly. We put them on a pathway in case they do not call the State of Alabama to remove themselves.

Chair LEE. Secretary Landry, Louisiana recently enacted safeguards for mail-in ballot returns via third-party collection. Can you share with us how these safeguards reduce fraud and third-party ballot collections?

Ms. LANDRY. Certainly.

We passed some legislation last year that closed loopholes regarding ballot harvesting in addition to prohibiting individuals from picking up multiple ballots. We also now prohibit delivery by any method where one individual is delivering multiple ballots.

If you are not a family member, you can only deliver one ballot, whether it is to the registrar voters office or to a post office box.

Chair LEE. Have these additional safeguards reduced voting via absentee ballot?

Ms. LANDRY. They have not.

Chair LEE. In your opinion, did these measures unduly burden absentee voters in Louisiana?

Ms. LANDRY. They do not. In fact, we had a lawsuit regarding one of our new laws, and the plaintiffs, after the most recent election, moved to dismiss the lawsuit. In the motion, they mentioned that they were unable to find a single plaintiff who was impacted by the legislation in spite of their thinking that they would. They could not find anyone.

We think they are just common-sense measures, and they protect our most vulnerable voters.

Chair LEE. Secretary LaRose, Ohio, much like my home State, implemented pre-processing for mail-in ballots, which you mentioned in your testimony. We attribute rapid processing of absentee ballots as a crucial part of calling election results in a timely manner.

Will you explain to us how early processing of ballots increases confidence in elections in Ohio?

Mr. LAROSE. Yes. Thank you, Chairwoman.

As soon as an absentee ballot arrives back at a county board of elections, it can be opened by a bipartisan team, a Democrat and Republican sitting there, slicing it open, checking the name, date of birth, last four of the Social, State driver's license, and verifying the signature against the signature on file in the data base.

At that point, they can flatten it out. Let us not, you know, trivialize that. They have to be flattened out to go through the machine. Sometimes that takes some time to do. They flatten those ballots out, and they are ready to scan so that on election night, at 7:30 p.m. precisely, the very first ballots counted are those early votes and absentee votes because they are all processed and ready to go.

Chair LEE. Tell us, if you would, around what time was Ohio able to call the race for the Presidency on election night?

Mr. LAROSE. It was in the 10 p.m. hour, and we were at 90 percent reported by 11 p.m. However, that last 10 percent took us until about 3 a.m. because we had a few counties that needed some help. Before everybody went home for the night, we had every vote counted, every Election Day vote counted and reported.

Chair LEE. Thank you, Secretary LaRose.

I now recognize Ranking Member Sewell for 5 minutes for the purpose of questioning our witnesses.

Ms. SEWELL. Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to welcome to the Nation's Capital my Secretary of State, Wes Allen.

Sir, you mentioned in your testimony that the foundation of election integrity is voter maintenance. I note that you mentioned that you withdrew Alabama from the ERIC organization and replaced it with AVID, a Alabama Voter Integrity Database, to partner with State agencies to identify individuals who purged from the rolls.

Last year, you, led an effort to clean the rolls in Alabama by directing the Department—the board of registrar to remove registered voters that were, quote, “noncitizen identification number,” end quote, by the Department of Homeland Security.

Shortly after implementing this purge, a group of civil rights organizations challenged, sir, your voter purging program in court.

Do you know, sir, what percentage of voters that you purged were actually U.S. citizens and should be eligible to vote versus not being eligible?

Mr. ALLEN. Well, we are extremely proud—I am extremely proud of my staff who worked to implement this program, and I will say that—

Ms. SEWELL. Sir, it was 93 percent, 93.8 percent of the 3,251 voters that were purged from the rolls were actually U.S. citizens and should have been eligible to vote.

Federal courts have acknowledged that relying solely on data bases like the State Department of Homeland Security, State DMV data bases, and the Federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlement Data base can, quote, “have a very high rate of inaccuracy.”

How will you ensure, sir—first of all, is the voter purge program still ongoing? How do you ensure that you are actually capturing voters that should be ineligible?

Mr. ALLEN. Well, I will say that our staff is working extremely hard to make sure the voter file maintenance is top of mind each and every day when we come into the office, and we will continue to make sure that only United States citizens are on Alabama voter files.

Ms. SEWELL. Yes. You know, that is the law that only American citizens can vote.

How much did it cost to defend that program in court? Do you know? How much money did you spend?

Mr. ALLEN. I do not have that number.

Ms. SEWELL. All I can say is that Alabama taxpayers should not be paying for a program that has shown such a high rate of inaccuracy. While I totally understand the importance of making sure that every person who is on the voter roll is eligible, I think that there are better ways to do that than voter purging.

Mr. Allen, Secretary Allen, you also mentioned in your written testimony that the State banned ballot harvesting last year. The State legislature passed an initiative that will criminalize people for assisting others with their absentee ballots.

For example, if someone pays their family member to actually take their ballot, to deliver their ballot, that person would be—that assistance would be criminally charged. I am not sure if that was the intent, but I can tell you that several of my constituents called me in fear of voting absentee because they were afraid of it being rejected for simple reasons like, you know, not being able to provide the ballot themselves but, actually, having a family member deliver it.

Can you give us assurances that we, in Alabama, can actually, you know, make it easier for voters to access the ballot box. I mean, we are one of three States that do not have early voting. I think it is really important that we get it right.

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, ma'am. The right to vote is sacred, and what that bill did was protect absentee voting. Paid political activists should not be involved in manipulating the absentee process, and that is what it is.

Ms. SEWELL. I hear what you are saying, but these are family members who are trying to help their elderly parents actually vote,

and they should not be in fear of, you know, actually turning in a ballot if they have to borrow money from their mother to actually get to the post office, or to get to the agency, to the voting registration office.

Mr. ALLEN. There is no need to fear. You know, we mimic Federal law. If anybody is disabled, they can have anybody that they choose to help them with the application. It does not pertain to the ballots themselves. It is already legal in Alabama for anyone to return a ballot for anyone else.

SB1 specifically talked about the application portion of the absentee ballot process, and it did that. It protected the absentee process.

Ms. SEWELL. Well, sir, I think that both of us, given the great history, the amazing history that occurred in our State, we really owe it to every Alabamian to make sure that not only are they eligible to vote, but they have access to the ballot box.

Mr. ALLEN. They do.

Ms. SEWELL. Having said that, Secretary Thomas, I note that you all passed a State-level Voting Rights Act in 2023.

I know I am about to run out of time. I wanted to ask if she could just answer one question with respect to that.

Chair LEE. Go right ahead.

Ms. SEWELL. Sure.

Can you talk just a little bit about this initiative and how it will make it easier for folks to vote, your new law?

Ms. THOMAS. Sure.

The Connecticut Voting Rights Act passed last session to codify some of the elements of the National Voter Rights Act, such as preclearance, making sure that materials related to voting were provided in languages and communities that were majority in certain languages.

It also provides a great transparency for members of the public. They can access statistics and data about voting in their communities via a GIS system. In Connecticut anyway, it passed handily and many—

Ms. SEWELL. Implemented in the 2024 election?

Ms. THOMAS. Not the Voting Rights Act. Other than the language access. We did implement early voting in 2024.

Ms. SEWELL. Thank you, Madam Chair, for indulging me.

I also would ask unanimous consent to submit several articles into the record.

Chair LEE. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information referred to follows:]



March 28, 2025

Re: Oppose the SAVE Act, H.R. 22 / S. 128

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the millions of American citizens living overseas, including tens of thousands of service members, their spouses, and family members, we strongly urge you to oppose the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, H.R. 22 / S. 128.

The SAVE Act would effectively end mail voter registration; instead of simply mailing a form, most Americans would have to present a birth certificate or passport *in person* to a local election official every single time they register or re-register to vote. The SAVE Act would also upend or eliminate online voter registration.

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986 protects the rights of military service members and their eligible family members and other American citizens living abroad to vote in our elections. For nearly 40 years, UOCAVA has required states and territories to allow eligible voters to register and request an absentee ballot using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), which they submit by mail or, in some states, by fax or email, to their local election offices. In some states, Americans who live overseas can also register to vote by using their state's mail registration form or online registration portal.

Millions of American civilians and uniformed service members abroad have used these registration methods for decades. For example, in the two years ending with the 2020 elections, more than 760,000 applicants submitted a Federal Post Card Application to register to vote.¹ And in the two years ending with the 2022 midterms, more than 300,000 applicants submitted a Federal Post Card Application.²

These registrations would likely become impossible under the SAVE Act. It would reverse crucial voting access gains that have been won by generations of Americans, including thousands of service members of color.

¹ U.S. Election Assistance Commission, *Election Administration and Voting Survey 2020 Comprehensive Report*, (August 2021) at 193, https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/document_library/files/2020_EAVS_Report_Final_508c.pdf.

² U.S. Election Assistance Commission, *Election Administration and Voting Survey 2022 Comprehensive Report*, (June 2023) at 215, https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/2024-11/2022_EAVS_Report_508c.pdf.

We are proud to represent the United States, both formally and informally, abroad. Americans living overseas, including U.S. service members and their families, are citizens fiercely committed to American democracy. Yet the SAVE Act does not make possible, or even account for, our participation in American elections.

Instead of making it easier for Americans to make their voices heard, or strengthening the security of our elections, the SAVE Act would decimate our members' ability to register and vote.

For these reasons, we urge you to oppose the SAVE Act.

Best regards,

U.S. Vote Foundation

Association of Americans Resident Overseas

American Citizens Abroad

Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas

Secure Families Initiative

Alabama's Racial Turnout Gap Hit a 16-Year High in 2024

Sixty years after Bloody Sunday in Selma, civil rights activists' progress in securing equal access to the ballot is being eroded by a widening racial turnout gap.



Coryn Grange

March 4, 2025

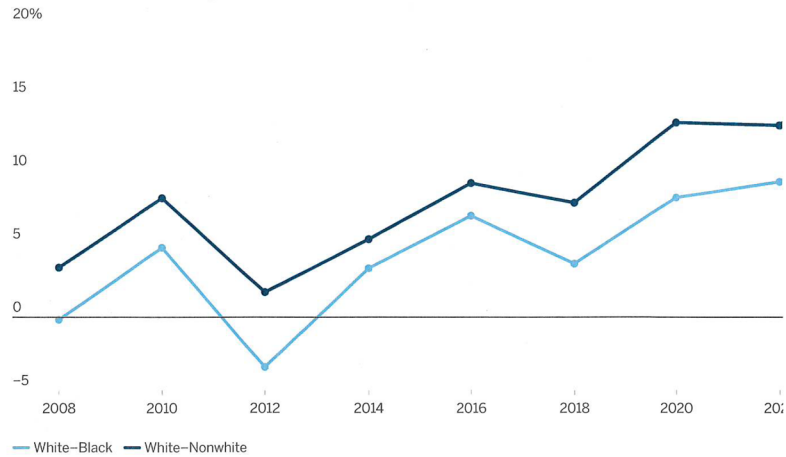
Sixty years ago, civil rights activists seeking to peacefully march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to demand equal access to the ballot were brutally assaulted by police. The events of what became known as Bloody Sunday were a catalyst for the [Voting Rights Act of 1965](#) [\[link-1\]](#) — a landmark law that successfully protected against racially discriminatory voting policies for decades. The Supreme Court has since hollowed out the law, and data from the 2024 elections shows that activists' hard-won victories for voting rights are being eroded. In December, a Brennan Center analysis showed that the gap between white and Black voter partici-

pation in Georgia [grew](#) [\[link-2\]](#) in 2024; our new analysis shows that the same thing happened in Alabama.

In Alabama's 2024 elections, the gap between white and Black voter turnout was larger than at any point since at least 2008. The white–Black turnout gap increased to 13 percentage points (up from 9 percentage points in 2022), while the white–nonwhite turnout gap grew to 19 percentage points (up from 13 percentage points). Had Alabama's eligible nonwhite voters turned out to vote at the same rate as eligible white voters, more than

200,000 additional ballots would have been cast in 2024.

Racial Turnout Gap in Alabama, 2008–2024



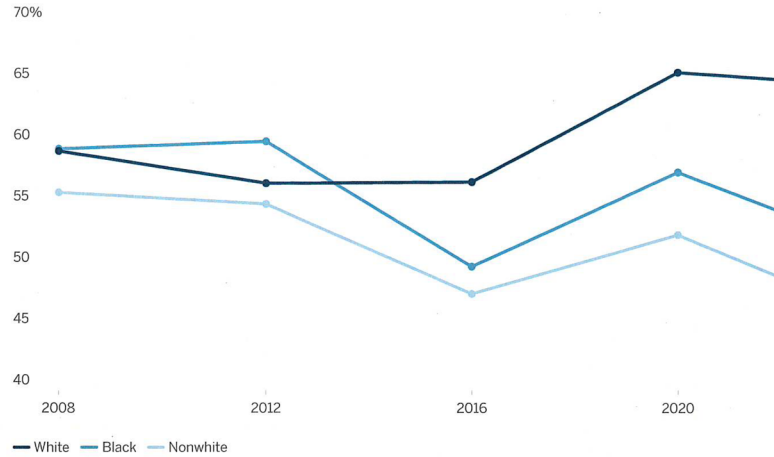
Source: L2 Political and Catalyst

Both the white-Black and white-nonwhite gaps have increased by nearly 50 percent since the 2022 election and were, respectively, 65 and 44 percent larger than in the preceding presidential election. The disparity in turnout rates between Alabama's white and Black voters grew even as overall voter turnout declined in 2024 compared with the 2020 election. That drop was precipitous for Black voters: Between

2020 and 2024, turnout fell by 6 percentage points for Black voters, compared with only 1 percentage point for white voters.

Black and white turnout rates were considerably closer in the 2008 and 2012 elections. Since then, Black turnout has trended down while white turnout has remained considerably higher. Overall, Black turnout in Alabama is now the lowest it has been since before the Obama era.

Presidential Election Turnout Rates by Race in Alabama, 2008–2024



Source: L2 Political and Catalyst

We can't say for certain what caused the white-Black turnout gap to widen in Alabama, but the surge in restrictive voting laws since the *Shelby County v. Holder* decision has likely played a role in depressing turnout among Black voters.

Our research [\[link-3\]](#) shows that a decade after the ruling

[gutted the Voting Rights Act \[link-4\]](#), these gaps are growing everywhere, but they are widening especially quickly in [places like Alabama \[link-5\]](#) that were subject to the "preclearance condition" that was suspended in *Shelby County*. While we know there are ways to fight the turnout gap — enacting a fairer congres-

sional map in Alabama, for instance, increased turnout for some Black voters in 2024 — the cumulative effect of restrictive voting laws leads to unequal participation.

The loss of voting protections and the growth of the racial turnout gap brings Alabama closer to an ignoble past rather than a democracy equally open to all citizens. The late Rep. John R. Lewis was one of the nonviolent voting rights protesters brutalized on Selma's Edmund Pettus Bridge 60 years ago. As he [wrote \[link-6\]](#) in an op-ed shortly before his death in 2020, it's time that we "redeem the soul of our nation."

Links

link-1: Voting Rights Act of 1965 <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-rights-act-explained>

link-2: grew <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/racial-turnout-gap-grew-georgia-again>

link-3: Our research <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/growing-racial-disparities-voter-turnout-2008-2022>

link-4: gutted the Voting Rights Act <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/effects-shelby-county-v-holder-voting-rights-act>

link-5: places like Alabama <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/10-years-after-scotus-gutted-voting-rights-act-alabama-turnout-gap-worse>

link-6: wrote <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/30/opinion/john-lewis-civil-rights-america.html#:~:text=it%20is%20an%20act%2C%20and,for%20what%20you%20truly%20believe.>

**The Leadership Conference
on Civil and Human Rights**

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Suite 1100 202.466.3435 fax
Washington, DC www.civilrights.org
20036



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Rights Under Law
League of United Latin
American Citizens (LULAC)
League of Women Voters
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Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)
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Indians (NCAI)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Education Association
National Fair Housing Alliance
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for
Women & Families
National Urban League
People for the American Way
Religious Action Center of
Reform Judaism
Service Employees International Union
Sikh Coalition
UndocuUS

President and CEO

Maya Wiley

March 28, 2025

OPPOSE H.R. 22, the SAVE Act

Dear Representative,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 240 national organizations to promote and protect the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, and the 108 undersigned organizations, we strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 22, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act.

The SAVE Act represents a shameful, divisive attempt to prevent millions of eligible U.S. citizens — disproportionately Latinos, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other voters of color — from registering to vote. It amends the National Voter Registration Act to require onerous documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote in federal elections and contains numerous other harmful provisions designed to restrict participation by lawfully registered voters.

As our nation commemorates the 60th anniversaries of Bloody Sunday and the Voting Rights Act, far too many communities are still excluded from participating in our democracy. Since the Supreme Court's decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013), 31 states have [enacted](#) 114 restrictive voting laws, which disproportionately burden voters of color. The harm to communities of color has been palpable: Racial disparities in voter turnout have been [increasing](#), particularly in areas formerly protected by the Voting Rights Act's preclearance provision, which the Court dismantled in *Shelby County*.

The SAVE Act perpetuates a particularly heinous version of the voter fraud myth and, like other lies that provide the predicate for voter suppression while claiming to pursue "election integrity," is a solution in search of a problem that cynically trades on dangerous myths and stereotypes. This bill is based on misinformation that exploits the demographic fear stoked by those afraid of the fully inclusive, multiracial democracy the United States can and must become, and it erects a significant, unnecessary barrier to the ballot for many citizen voters. The legislation turns Congress's constitutional responsibility to safeguard free and fair elections on its head in order to advance a false narrative that the changes in the U.S. population — including continued growth of Latino, Asian American, Native American, and communities of color more broadly — are a threat. This narrative is blatantly false, and it is one that must be rebuked strongly.



March 28, 2025
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Our nation has strict laws and effective safeguards in place to ensure that only U.S. citizens vote in federal elections, and every serious analysis conducted has concluded that allegations of widespread noncitizen voting lack any basis in fact. Current laws include criminal penalties, fines, and possible deportation. It defies common sense that undocumented immigrants would risk losing their freedom and their families just to cast a single ballot.

One of the SAVE Act's most devastating harms will be the intimidation or chilling of citizens in immigrant communities and communities of color from exercising their lawful right to vote. These communities are already unfairly targeted by anti-immigrant policies at the federal, state, and local levels, particularly under the policies of the current Trump administration. In advance of the 2024 election, state and local officials took actions against immigrant communities, falsely claiming that undocumented immigrants were registered to vote. For example, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton last year [raided](#) the homes of longstanding members of the nonpartisan League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) under the guise that they were unlawfully registering ineligible voters.

The SAVE Act makes it difficult for all American citizens to register and vote, but its impact would be especially severe for communities of color. Research [released in 2024](#) by the University of Maryland's Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement (CDCE), VoteRiders, and the Brennan Center for Justice revealed the stark reality that U.S. citizens of color were three times more likely than white citizens to lack documents such as U.S. birth certificates, passports, naturalization certificates, or certificates of citizenship — or face difficulties accessing them. For example, while approximately [half of American adults](#) possess a passport, [two-thirds](#) of Black Americans do not.

Adding to that burden is that proof of citizenship is not a one-time requirement. The SAVE Act requires submission of citizenship documentation every time someone registers to vote, forcing voters who move and seek to register in another location to provide documentation they may lack or cannot access easily. This requirement would also greatly hinder voter registration drives and other efforts, which is an important avenue to ensure eligible voters are registering in time to be able to cast a ballot, especially for communities of color. Notably, when Kansas enacted a similar law, more than 31,000 otherwise eligible U.S. citizens — 12 percent of applicants — were [blocked from registering](#). If enacted, the SAVE Act would replicate this law nationwide, likely preventing millions from registering.

The SAVE Act is also certain to produce systematic voter purges, threatening to disenfranchise citizens who are lawfully registered to vote. Importantly, the SAVE Act does not require notification of registered voters before they are removed from voting rolls — rolling back one of the essential protections of the National Voter Registration Act. And states in search of “noncitizen voters” have recently engaged in overbroad purges, which ensnared eligible voters and especially naturalized citizen voters. For example, Alabama's secretary of state instructed county registrars in 2024 to remove more than 3,000 registered voters who had ever received “noncitizen identification numbers” by the Department of Homeland Security. Lawsuits by [civil rights organizations](#) and the [U.S. Department of Justice](#) revealed that the purge included more than [2,000 citizens](#) who were lawfully registered to vote.



March 28, 2025
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Instead of proceeding with this legislation, Congress should take actions to ensure free and full access to the ballot so that all Americans can have a voice in the decision-making that impacts their daily lives, their freedoms, and their futures. These include passing the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, the Freedom to Vote Act, the Native American Voting Rights Act, and the DC Statehood bill.

We urge you to vote against H.R. 22. **The Leadership Conference intends to include your position on H.R. 22 in our voting record for the 119th Congress.** If you have any questions, please contact Leslie Proll, senior director of the voting rights program at The Leadership Conference, at proll@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
A. Philip Randolph Institute
Advancement Project
AFL-CIO
AFT
All On The Line
All Voting is Local Action
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Civil Liberties Union
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)
Arab American Institute
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)
Asian Pacific Islanders Civic Action Network, Massachusetts
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
Black Voters Matter Fund
Campaign Legal Center
Children's HealthWatch
Chispa LCV
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Common Cause
COOLJC Region 8 SJEREC
Culturingua
Defend The Vote Action Fund
Democracy 21
Democracy SENTRY
Demos
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
Equal Justice Society
Equality California



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Fair Elections Center
 Fair Fight Action
 Faith in Action
 Faithful Democracy
 Fayetteville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
 Feminist Majority Foundation
 Funders' Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP)
 Groundworks New Mexico
 HeadCount
 Hip Hop Caucus
 Hispanic Federation
 Human Rights Campaign
 Impact Fund
 Interfaith Alliance
 Japanese American Citizens League
 Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA)
 Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
 Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
 League of Conservation Voters
 League of United Latin American Citizens
 League of Women Voters of the United States
 Lighthouse Immigrant Advocates
 MALDEF
 Minnesota Council on Foundations
 Missouri Asian American Youth Foundation
 Missouri Voter Protection Coalition
 Movement Advancement Project
 N.Y. Elections, Census & Redistricting Institute
 NAACP
 NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.
 Nathaniel R. Jones Foundation
 National Action Network
 National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
 National Association of Social Workers
 National Coalition of Negro Women
 National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
 National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
 National Council of Jewish Women
 National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
 National Education Association
 National Low Income Housing Coalition
 National Network for Arab American Communities
 National Organization for Women



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National Partnership for Women & Families
National Urban League
National Women's Law Center
Native American Rights Fund
NCNW
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Our Homes, Our Votes
People For the American Way
Planned Parenthood Action Fund
Popular Democracy
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Reproductive Freedom for All
SEIU
Services, Immigrant Rights and Education Network (SIREN)
Silver State Equality
Sojourners/SojoAction
Southern Coalition for Social Justice
Southern Poverty Law Center
Stand Up America
State Voices
Texas Civil Rights Project
The Civics Center
The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
The Workers Circle
UltraViolet Action
UnidosUS
Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
United Church of Christ
United Food and Commercial Workers
Verified Voting
VOICES for Alabama's Children
Voter Participation Center
VoteRiders
Voto Latino



The Office of
Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison
 helping people afford their lives and live with dignity, safety, and respect • www.ag.state.mn.us

March 31, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Michael Johnson
 568 Cannon House Office Building
 Washington, DC, 20515-1804

The Honorable Hakeem S. Jeffries
 2267 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, DC, 20515-3208

RE: Opposition to the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act

Dear Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries,

We, the undersigned Attorneys General, write this letter in the strongest opposition to H.R. 22, “Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act” or the “SAVE Act.” The legislation purports to protect federal elections from non-citizen voters by imposing burdensome proof of citizenship requirements. Congressman Chip Roy, the sponsor of the Bill, asserts that the legislation is necessary because of the risk that millions of non-citizens may have access to the ballot box. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the SAVE Act is an oppressive solution in search of a problem that would directly disenfranchise eligible voters who reside in our states.

Non-Citizen Voting is Extremely Rare

Federal law already prohibits non-citizens from voting in federal elections. Illegal voting by a non-citizen can result in a fine and up to a year in prison.¹ In addition, a non-citizen who improperly votes risks removal and other immigration consequences.² The

¹ 18 U.S.C. § 611.

² 8 U.S.C. § 1182(a)(10)(D).

National Voter Registration Act generally requires applicants who register by mail to vote in federal elections to attest to their citizenship under penalty of perjury.³

Given the potential consequences, it is not surprising that voting by non-citizens is extremely rare. As the conservative think tank Cato Institute noted, the percentage of non-citizens who vote is nearly zero.⁴ A study by the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University of 42 jurisdictions with high immigration populations found that out of 23.5 million votes cast, just 30 non-citizens voted, which constituted 0.0001% of the vote.⁵ A similar audit of the Georgia voting rolls by the Secretary of State found 20 non-citizens had registered to vote out of 8.2 million voters and only nine of the 20 had a record of voting.⁶

The SAVE Act Creates Substantial Burdens on Voters, Especially Poor and Minority Voters

Against this background of negligible participation, the SAVE Act would overcorrect by amending the National Voter Registration Act (“NVRA”) to require that a voter provide “documentary proof of citizenship” before registering to vote. But in enacting the NVRA over thirty years ago, Congress recognized that the right to vote is a fundamental right, that governments have a duty to promote the exercise of that right, and that discriminatory and unfair registration laws can have a damaging effect on voter participation and disproportionately harm voter participation by various groups, including racial minorities.⁷ The NVRA thus established national standards for voter registration by **removing** barriers to registration, such as cost, misinformation, and inconvenience.

The SAVE Act would reimpose many of those barriers. It would strip eligible voters of the ability to register unless the voter could pay for—and present—documentary proof of their United States citizenship. For most eligible voters, the bill functionally restricts “documentary proof” to a United States passport or the combination of a government-issued identification card and a birth record or naturalization document.⁸ And the bill further requires that any birth record “include[] the full name of the applicant,” despite the fact that an applicant’s name may have changed between the time the voter was born and when they registered to vote.

³ 52 U.S.C. § 20508(b)(2); 11 C.F.R. § 9428.4(b)(1).

⁴ Walter Olsen, [Shedding Light on the Incidence of Illegal Noncitizen Voting](#), *Cato at Liberty* (May 22, 2024).

⁵ Douglas Keith, Myrna Perez, Christopher Famighetti, [Non Citizen Voting: The Missing Millions](#), Brennan Center for Justice (May 5, 2017).

⁶ Associated Press, [Georgia Citizenship audit finds few noncitizens on voting rolls](#), (October 23, 2024).

⁷ 52 U.S.C. § 20501(a).

⁸ Only five states currently allow individuals to obtain a REAL ID that provide proof of citizenship. Dep’t of Homeland Security, [Enhanced Drivers Licenses: What Are They?](#)

An eligible voter would therefore be unable to register, or change their voter registration after a move, unless they could procure a passport, birth certificate, or naturalization record that perfectly matched their name. Yet, over 21 million voting-age citizens (nearly 10% of the voting population) do not have ready access to a passport, birth record, or naturalization record.⁹ In fact, only half of Americans currently possess a valid passport¹⁰—a document that costs \$165 to initially obtain and itself requires access to a birth certificate or other proof of citizenship and access to a passport acceptance facility.¹¹ And 80% of married women (approximately 69 million women) would not have a valid birth certificate under the SAVE Act because those women chose to adopt their partner’s last name.¹² Other individuals who change their name in adulthood, such as transgender individuals, may similarly lack a matching birth certificate and therefore risk being disenfranchised. Ultimately, the SAVE Act will disqualify eligible voters who have validly voted in past elections because they could not access the documents mandated by the law, or they have valid documents that do not perfectly match their current names.

The SAVE Act compounds these issues by requiring eligible voters who register by mail to present their “documentary proof of United States citizenship **in person** to the office of the appropriate election official.” This in-person presentation requirement would functionally invalidate online voter registration systems, which are currently available in 42 states and the District of Columbia, and which facilitate countless voter registration applications, changes, and renewals.¹³ The presentation requirement would also curtail registration amongst eligible voters who could not easily travel to a local election office during business hours because of their jobs, family situations, or residential remoteness. Finally, the SAVE Act will jeopardize the franchise for every single uniformed servicemember serving outside their residential state who, by reason of their service to this country, cannot return to their local election office.¹⁴

⁹ Jillian Andres-Rothschild, Samuel B. Novey, Michael J. Hanmer, [Who Lacks ID in America Today? An Exploration of Voter ID Access, Barriers, and Knowledge](#), University of Maryland Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement (June 2024).

¹⁰ United States Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs, [U.S. Passports: Reports and Statistics](#) (last accessed Feb. 12, 2025).

¹¹ United States Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs, [Passport Fees](#) (last accessed Feb. 12, 2025).

¹² Greta Bedekovics and Sydney Bryan, [The SAVE Act Would Disenfranchise Millions of Citizens](#), [Center for American Progress](#) (Jan. 31, 2025).

¹³ National Conference of State Legislatures, [Online Voter Registration](#) (last accessed Feb. 12, 2025).

¹⁴ Federal law currently grants each active-duty uniformed servicemember serving outside their resident state the unconditional right to register and vote by mail in all federal elections. *See* 52 U.S.C. § 20302(a).

The SAVE Act Would Create Unreasonable Burdens on the States and be Expensive to Implement

The implementation of the SAVE Act would also prove unnecessarily burdensome to state election officials and impose significant costs on the states. While the NVRA currently establishes minimum standards for registration practices and leaves to the states the exact methods of their implementation, the SAVE Act commandeers state resources and directs them towards the verification of a voter's "documentary proof of citizenship." The legislation would require states to develop and implement onerous new processes to verify citizenship absent direct evidence and resolve discrepancies in documentary proof of citizenship. Moreover, many states will have to fundamentally restructure their voter registration and voter roll maintenance procedures. And states will further need to reformulate election judge training for in-person voting. Worse still, the SAVE Act could be read to criminalize mistakes made when implementing these new burdens, punishing election officials who "register[] an applicant to vote in an election for Federal office who fails to present documentary proof of United States citizenship" with up to five years in prison.

For all these reasons, we urge your opposition to the SAVE Act and hope you will fight to keep the franchise accessible to as many Americans as possible.

Sincerely,



KEITH ELLISON
Attorney General of Minnesota



ROB BONTA
Attorney General of California



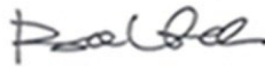
PHILIP J. WEISER
Attorney General of Colorado



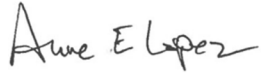
WILLIAM TONG
Attorney General of Connecticut



KATHLEEN JENNINGS
Attorney General of Delaware



BRIAN L. SCHWALB
Attorney General of District of Columbia



ANNE E. LOPEZ
Attorney General of Hawaii



KWAME RAOUL
Attorney General of Illinois



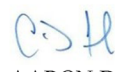
AARON M. FREY
Attorney General of Maine



ANDREA JOY CAMPBELL
Attorney General of Massachusetts



DANA NESSELL
Attorney General of Michigan



AARON D. FORD
Attorney General of Nevada



MATTHEW J. PLATKIN
Attorney General of New Jersey



LETITIA JAMES
Attorney General of New York



DAN RAYFIELD
Attorney General of Oregon



PETER F. NERONHA
Attorney General of Rhode Island



CHARITY R. CLARK
Attorney General of Vermont



NICK BROWN
Attorney General of Washington

Southern Poverty Law Center
400 Washington Ave
Montgomery, AL 36104
splcenter.org



March 31, 2025

RE: VOTE NO on H.R. 22, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Southern Poverty Law Center ("SPLC"), we write to urge you to oppose H.R. 22, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act (SAVE) Act. This legislation would disenfranchise millions of citizens, endanger nonpartisan election workers, and create an administrative disaster that would disrupt our electoral system nationwide. Far from safeguarding free and fair elections, this bill would undermine them.

The SPLC was founded in Alabama in 1971 to help make the promise of the Civil Rights Movement a reality for all, including ensuring every eligible U.S. citizen has the right and opportunity to vote. Through litigation, advocacy, and public education, we work to safeguard democratic institutions and values, including expanding ballot access and eliminating barriers to voting. Our work, particularly in the Deep South, has made us well attuned to spotting exclusionary voting laws, even when disguised as measures to protect election integrity. The SAVE Act is one such law.

Voting is the language of our democracy; it is how the American people make our voices heard and effect change in our communities. For half a century, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 helped to secure voting rights for all Americans, particularly for Black Americans and, subsequently, for other Americans of color. Over the past decade, however, the Supreme Court's weakening of that landmark law has enabled a surge of state laws restricting voting access, disproportionately affecting Black Americans.¹ The SAVE Act would further limit the freedom to vote for all eligible voters, and would acutely hurt Black and Brown people, rural voters, elderly voters, and married women. The SAVE Act represents one of the most sweeping disenfranchisement efforts in decades, and, alarmingly, if passed would be the first federal roll back of voting rights since Reconstruction.

Proponents of the SAVE Act cite the threat of noncitizen voting, but evidence overwhelmingly shows this issue is virtually nonexistent. A study of the 2016 election in 42 jurisdictions in 12 states found only 30 instances of suspected noncitizen voting out of 23.5 million votes cast (0.0001%).² Audits in states like Texas, North Carolina, and Georgia similarly found negligible evidence of noncitizen voting.³ Existing federal law already bans noncitizen voting in federal elections and imposes severe penalties for violations.⁴

¹ Southern Poverty Law Center (2023), "A Decade-Long Erosion: Impact of Shelby Decision on the Political Participation and Representation of Black People and Other People of Color in the Deep South," available at <https://www.splcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/files/report-impact-shelby-decision-10-years-later.pdf>.

² Brennan Center for Justice (2017), "Noncitizen Voting: The Missing Millions," available at <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/noncitizen-voting-missing-millions>.

³ Jude Joffe-Block (2024), "6 Facts About False Noncitizen Voting Claims and the Election," *National Public Radio*, available at <https://www.npr.org/2024/10/12/nx-s1-5147789/voting-election-2024-noncitizen-fact-check-trump>.

⁴ See 18 USC § 1015, 18 USC § 611, 8 U.S. Code § 1182, and 8 U.S. Code § 1227.



As one federal judge aptly noted, such measures are "a solution in search of a problem."⁵ Yet, in "solving" a non-existent problem, the SAVE Act creates several significant new ones.

The SAVE Act Would Block Millions of Eligible Voters from the Voting

The SAVE Act requires Americans registering or re-registering (due to a move, name change, or party switch) to provide documentary proof of citizenship, i.e. a passport or birth certificate. More than 21 million U.S. citizens lack easy access to such documentation, and roughly half of adults lack a valid passport.⁶ Additionally, an estimated 69 million U.S. citizen women do not have a birth certificate that reflects their birth name due to marriage.⁷

In practice, this would mean a married woman without a passport and whose birth certificate does not match her legal name would be unable to register. Others would face similar barriers. For example, in Kansas, Steven Fish was unable to register because he lacked an original copy of his birth certificate and did not know where to obtain one, as the Air Force base in Illinois where he was born had closed in 1990.⁸

The SAVE Act would also create considerable hardship for Americans aged 65 and older, who are less likely to have the required documents, as well as for Black Americans and working-class citizens, the vast majority of whom lack a passport.⁹ These concerns aren't theoretical. When Kansas implemented a similar law, it blocked over 31,000 eligible voters—12% of applicants—from registering before being struck down in federal court.¹⁰ The SAVE Act would replicate this on a national scale, resulting in a far-reaching and regressive overhaul of voter registration and a dramatic rollback of voting as we know it.

The SAVE Act Puts Nonpartisan Election Officials in Legal Peril

The SAVE Act would force nonpartisan election officials to hastily establish a process for collecting proof of citizenship and then punish them with up to five years in prison for making an error in that process.¹¹ It also imposes that same penalty on employees of the executive branch who provide "material assistance" (a term left undefined in the bill) to a noncitizen attempting to register to vote.¹² What's more, the bill creates a private right of action to allow any individual to sue an election official for civil damages for

⁵ *Fish v. Schwab*, 957 F.3d 1105 (10th Cir. 2020).

⁶ Jillian Rothschild (2024), "Who Lacks ID in America Today? An Exploration of Voter ID Access, Barriers, and Knowledge," *University of Maryland Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement*, available at <https://cdce.umd.edu/sites/cdce.umd.edu/files/pubs/Voter%20ID%202023%20survey%20Key%20Results%20Jan%202024%20%281%29.pdf>.

⁷ Greta Bedekovics and Sydney Bryant (2025), "The SAVE Act Would Disenfranchise Millions of Citizens," *Center for American Progress*, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-save-act-would-disenfranchise-millions-of-citizens/>.

⁸ John Hanna (2024), "Kansas Once Required Voters to Prove Citizenship. That Didn't Work Out So Well," *Associated Press*, available at <https://apnews.com/article/kansas-noncitizen-voting-proof-of-citizenship-50d56a0b8d1f0fde15480aab3db67f4f>.

⁹ Jamie Ballard (2025), "Adults Under 30 are More Likely Than Older Americans to Have a Current U.S. passport," *YouGov*, available at <https://today.yougov.com/travel/articles/46028-adults-under-30-more-likely-have-us-passport>.

¹⁰ "Kansas Once Required Voters to Prove Citizenship," *supra*, note 8.

¹¹ U.S. House of Representatives. (2025). *H.R. 22: SAVE Act*. 119th Congress. <https://www.congress.gov/bills/119th-congress/house-bill/22>. Section 2, subclause (j)(3)(C) amends Section 12(2) of the National Voter Registration Act to impose criminal penalties of up to five years for an official who registers an applicant to vote in a federal election without requiring documentary proof of U.S. citizenship. However, the bill does not specify a *mens rea* requirement.

¹² *Id.* Section 2, subclause (j)(3)(B) amends Section 12(2) of the National Voter Registration Act to impose criminal penalties of up to five years for "an officer or employee of the executive branch providing material assistance to a noncitizen in attempting to register to vote or vote in an election for Federal office."



allegedly failing to meet the SAVE Act's new proof requirement.¹³ This would undoubtedly prompt an avalanche of litigation targeting the very people who make our elections work. At a time when recruiting election officials has become more challenging than ever, exposing them to criminal and civil penalties is likely to cause staff shortages and worsen turnover.¹⁴

The SAVE Act Would Cause Administrative Chaos and Threaten Election Integrity Nationwide

Implementing the SAVE Act would create an administrative nightmare. The bill requires election officials—already underfunded and understaffed—to spend months notifying voters about the need for required documentation, collecting it, and updating voter records. It would also require each state to establish a process for individuals unable to provide proof of citizenship, including accepting undefined “other evidence” to demonstrate citizenship.¹⁵ Adding to these burdens, the SAVE Act would take effect immediately upon passage, providing states with no time to prepare.¹⁶ The bill also constitutes an unfunded mandate, offering no additional funding to help election officials implement all of its new and onerous requirements.

Further, in requiring voters show documentary proof of citizenship in person each time they register or update their registration, the SAVE Act would upend decades of voter registration modernization that has made our voting rolls more accurate and our elections more secure. The SAVE Act would effectively eliminate online voter registration, and it would make mail-in registration a more burdensome and less effective option; it would also likely limit automatic voter registration systems.¹⁷ The bill would also end third-party voter registration drives, which are used by communities across the political spectrum, and which have long been used to encourage and support civic engagement among communities of color.¹⁸

¹³ *Id.* Section 2, subclause (i) amends Section 11(b)(1) of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993—the private action clause—to add the additional action of “a violation of this Act, including the act of an election official who registers an applicant to vote in an election for Federal office without requiring documentary proof of United States citizenship.”

¹⁴ Brennan Center for Justice (2024), “Poll of Election Officials Finds Concerns About Safety, Political Interference,” available at <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/poll-election-officials-finds-concerns-about-safety-political>.

¹⁵ U.S. House of Representatives (2025). *H.R. 22: SAVE Act*. 119th Congress. <https://www.congress.gov/bills/119th-congress/house-bill/22>. Section 2, subclause (f)(3) amends Section 8 of the National Voter Registration Act to create a “process for those without documentary proof” but leaves open what that process and evidence might look like, adding to concerns about the potential for criminal and civil penalties described above.

¹⁶ *Id.* Section 8 requires that “This Act and the amendments made by this Act shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act, and shall apply with respect to applications for voter registration which are submitted on or after such date.”

¹⁷ U.S. House of Representatives (2025). *H.R. 22: SAVE Act*. 119th Congress. <https://www.congress.gov/bills/119th-congress/house-bill/22>. Section 2, subclause (b) amends Section 4 of the National Voter Registration Act to state that, “Under any method of voter registration in a State, the State shall not accept and process an application to register to vote in an election for Federal office unless the applicant presents documentary proof of United States citizenship with the application,” rendering automatic and online voter registration systems effectively inoperable. Section 2, subclause (d)(4) amends the National Voter Registration Act to require voters registering to vote using the national mail voter registration form to provide documentary proof of citizenship in person to the office of the appropriate election official. As many voters—especially voters with disabilities, elderly voters, and rural voters, among others—use mail-in voting because they cannot present to register in person, this requirement would make registration by these and any other community that relies on mail-in voting extremely difficult.

¹⁸ Terin Patel-Wilson and DeMitrus Causer (2024), “Keeping the Voter Drive Alive: Nonpartisan Voter Registration Work is a Cornerstone of Black Civil Rights Advocacy,” NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, available at <https://www.naacpldf.org/nonpartisan-voter-registration-drives-black-civil-rights-advocacy/>. See also, Joshua A. Douglas (2023), “A History of Third-Party Voter Registration Drives,” Institute for Responsive Government, available at <https://responsivegov.org/research/a-history-of-third-party-voter-registration-drives/>.



Equally troubling, the bill requires the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration to respond to citizenship inquiries from state governments within 24 hours.¹⁹ With millions of registrations annually, this impractical mandate would strain federal agencies and likely result in widespread errors due to the tight turnaround. In total, these requirements would create mass chaos, confusion, and potentially upend the administration of elections nationwide.

Conclusion

The SAVE Act addresses no real problem, but its consequences would be disastrous. It would disenfranchise millions of eligible U.S. citizens, put nonpartisan election officials at risk, and disrupt election administration nationwide. The Republican Secretary of State in Kansas has already warned of the fiasco caused by similar measures in a state of just 3 million people, and there is no reason to believe it would fare any better on a national scale.²⁰

Instead of pursuing harmful measures, Congress should listen to nonpartisan election officials and bipartisan advocates who have pleaded for consistent and adequate funding for state and local election administration and security.²¹ It should also pass the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act to strengthen our voting laws and modernize election standards. Now is the time to eliminate barriers to voting, not create new ones. The SPLC stands ready to partner with you in this critical work. Please do not hesitate to contact our Senior Policy Advisor for Voting Rights, Laura Williamson, at laura.williamson@splcenter.org or 301.875.1631.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'LaShawn G. Warren'.

LaShawn Warren
Chief Policy Officer
Southern Poverty Law Center

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Sakira Cook'.

Sakira Cook
Federal Policy Director
Southern Poverty Law Center

¹⁹ U.S. House of Representatives. (2025). *H.R. 22: SAVE Act*. 119th Congress. <https://www.congress.gov/bills/119th-congress/house-bill/22>. Section 2, subsection (f)(3) requires that "...any head of a Federal department or agency possessing information relevant to determining the eligibility of an individual to vote in elections for Federal office shall, not later than 24 hours after receipt of such request, provide the official with such information as may be necessary to enable the official to verify that an applicant for voter registration... is a citizen of the United States...".

²⁰ "Kansas Once Required Voters to Prove Citizenship," *supra*, note 8.

²¹ Election Officials Letter to Congress (2024), available at <https://issueone.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Faces-Election-Funding-Letter-May-2024.pdf>; National Association of Counties Letter to Congress (2023), available at <https://naco.sharefile.com/share/view/s6f30648816904133acd242d424cf90e>; Bipartisan National Council on Election Integrity Letter to Congress (2024), available at <https://issueone.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/NCEI-Election-Funding-Letter-May-2024.pdf>; Bipartisan Policy Center, Issue One, R Street Letter to Congress (2023), available at <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/download/?file=Awp-content/uploads/2023/06/TSGG-Elections-Appropriation-2023-FINAL.pdf>.

Chair LEE. I now recognize the gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Loudermilk for 5 minutes for the purpose of questioning our witnesses.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Well, thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you all for being here. I appreciate the job, the work that you all do. It is so very important for our free republic to have integrity in our elections, and that has been something that has risen in the interest of the American people in the past several years.

I have been the longest-serving Member of this Committee, and this used to be an obscure Committee when all our jurisdiction was security of the Capitol and Federal elections. Then in 2020, that became important to a lot of people for various reasons. I thank you for being here.

Secretary McGrane, I would like to ask you a couple of questions. I understand that the Idaho State law requires voters to be documented U.S. citizens.

Mr. MCGRANE. Correct.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Has this requirement unduly denied the vote to any lawful citizens?

Mr. MCGRANE. Not that I am aware.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. OK.

I also understand that Idaho recently removed a number of non-citizens from the voter rolls. How was your office able to accurately identify and remove noncitizen voters in a timely manner?

Mr. MCGRANE. I appreciate the question.

As I mentioned, last summer, we signed the Only Citizens Can Vote Act. Working through a process using our Idaho transportation department, Idaho State police, and then, most notably, Department of Homeland Security, we ran the entire 1.1 million registered voters in Idaho through those systems to verify citizenship. I mean, easily determining citizenship for the overwhelming majority, but then really dialing it into a case-by-case basis to narrow it down to 34 individuals who were noncitizens on Idaho's voter rolls. I think using that precision and scrutiny really helped.

As I identified in my remarks, there are still tools that are needed to help really bolster this for all of us.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Had you done that in the past, or was this the first time that you really started drilling down looking for noncitizens?

Mr. MCGRANE. This was the first time that we had actually had that, and I think this will be continued work, as you see from the President's executive order and other efforts.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. OK. I appreciate that.

Some of our colleagues continue to maintain that noncitizen voting is a non-issue. Is that true? Or do you have a different opinion on that?

Mr. MCGRANE. I think every American wants to make sure that their vote can count and that their vote counts the same as everybody else, and that there is no one who is ineligible participating in our elections because, as we know, any time that happens, especially that razor thin election like I mentioned earlier, it can cancel out somebody else's vote.

I do think this is an issue for determining accuracy.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Also, Idaho recently adopted the Only Citizens Can Vote Act, as you have mentioned. Can you share with us about how you and the Governor were able to successfully collaborate with State law enforcement and verify citizens' status, which you have a little bit.

Is there anything specific in there that we can learn from how you work with law enforcement and other agencies?

Mr. MCGRANE. I think specifically it really does tie in both to voter ID, right. Identification that identifies citizenship. I think that is an ongoing conversation and something that you can continue to do work on.

Then the other part really is investing in USCIS. Earlier today, I met with USCIS officials to talk about how can we bolster these efforts. I think they are eager to do the work. One of the things they reiterated to me was they are going to remove whatever barriers.

You heard from Secretary Allen some of the challenges other States had, to remove those barriers but to make sure we have the accurate data we need to do this voter verification.

Idaho competes with many of the States you guys represent for one of the fastest growing States in the Nation. That means people are moving. People are coming in. This is an ongoing effort to keep our voter rolls up-to-date and accurate.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. What can we do as Congress to assist you going forward with this? You know, what would you like to see Congress do to make that more efficient and more accurate?

Mr. MCGRANE. I think first and foremost is invest in this data base. There needs to be a data base built with this purpose in mind. Then also to review some of the policies.

I will say there are some really unique incidents we identify in Idaho that is a concern to make sure both noncitizens are not participating, but also citizens are not interfered with.

There is the Child Citizenship Act of 2000. There are what I would classify as undocumented citizens. These are people who have become citizens through their parents' naturalization, but it is actually not recorded because we have not built the tools in place to do the verification we are doing.

I think the efforts of this Committee, though, whether it is the SAVE Act or the President's executive order, are aimed toward that. If you can continue to invest in those resources and these agencies, that will really make a difference.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. OK. Thank you.

Secretary Landry, I have one question for you. I have a very good friend that used to serve in this Chamber who is now the Governor. Is there any relation?

Ms. LANDRY. We are not related. Governor Landry and I are from the same area of the State. Landry is a very common Cajun name. In Louisiana, it is the second most common Cajun name. It is sort of like Smith in south Louisiana.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Well, I assumed you were not because I understood everything that you said while you were here.

With that, I yield back.

Ms. LANDRY. I will not tell him you said that.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Please do.

Chair LEE. Thank you.

I now recognize Ranking Member Morelle of our full Committee for 5 minutes of questioning our witnesses.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Again, thanks to the secretaries for being here.

I want to start, Secretary Thomas, with you. As I understand it, you allowed for the first time in-person early voting in the State of Connecticut. As you look back on the election, what tools and techniques did you use?

Particularly, I am sort of interested, too, as it relates to misinformation and disinformation, but did you have any challenges with information as it related to early voting for the first time? Are there any challenges that you think you will face moving forward that you have to adjust to?

Ms. THOMAS. Thank you for the question.

Yes, we definitely, I think, like States around the country, were struggling to explain how elections worked. There is this narrative that they are not safe, et cetera.

We did many things. We proactively, as I said, reached out to many communities, over 100 grassroots organizations. We also held regular media activities for the press, answering commonly misunderstood aspects about election administration.

With our department of emergency services and public protection, we got together and put together a social media campaign in all communities to make sure that people understood where to go for trusted information.

As you say, I still think no matter what safeguards have been put in place, there is still this narrative. Most Connecticut residents think our elections are great, but feeding into the national news media, like, I get emails all the time saying disconnect our election machines from the internet, although they never have been.

I think we have this conflation of fear and mistrust that is often not well-placed.

Mr. MORELLE. Got you. Thank you.

Secretary Allen, I noted in your testimony you said we do not, in Alabama, we do not accept any ballot received after Election Day with the exception of UOCAVA ballots, which must be postmarked no later than the date of the election.

What is wrong, in your mind, with the idea of taking ballots that have been postmarked before the end of in-person voting on Election Day?

Mr. ALLEN. Because I believe in Election Day. Election Day is Election Day. We set it out in State law. We set it out in Federal law. The further we deviate from that I think it can lead—it is a very slippery slope.

Mr. MORELLE. Is it that you do not trust the U.S. Postal Service?

Mr. ALLEN. We have had problems with the U.S. Postal Service in the past.

Mr. MORELLE. Really?

When you file taxes with the IRS on April 15th, which is the filing deadline, if it is postmarked, should you be fined or should you in some way pay a penalty for filing your taxes late?

Mr. ALLEN. Well, fortunately, I filed my taxes early this year.

Mr. MORELLE. Yes, but April 15th is the deadline. I mean, we accept—honestly, I do not mean to be argumentative. I just find this sort of a strange argument that voters in America could vote on or before Election Day but vote in mail, but if it is received after Election Day, you could have—to your point, you could have sent it in early. You could send it in 3 days before Election Day.

The post office—and you can send it by absentee ballots in most States postmarked days before Election Day. If it does not get to the post office by Election Day, I do not understand the theory that—I do not understand why that is an issue?

Mr. ALLEN. Again, representative, I just believe that we have rules for a reason. The further we deviate from that is a very, very slippery slope. If we start accepting—I mean, the date is the date.

Mr. MORELLE. The date is the date. If you did it 2 days before Election Day, you have done it. You have complied with the date. There is no way that you are changing the outcome of the election after the end of the election period.

I mean, unless you do not—you believe somehow the United States Postal Service is doing something to the ballots, I think we generally, accept for all kinds of business things, tax purposes, I mean, postmarks actually mean something in America.

Does anybody disagree with me?

I hate to belabor the point in my last minute, but Secretary Landry, do you subscribe to the same view?

Ms. LANDRY. I think the ballots should be in by Election Day and that, you know, manipulation can occur. Once you start reporting results, that people can go out and gather more ballots and—

Mr. MORELLE. No, not if it is postmarked. I mean, you could not—I mean, I hate to—this is like a physical impossibility. You cannot affect the election after Election Day if you submitted the ballot prior to the deadline. It is just physically impossible, unless you go back in time or something like that.

Ms. LANDRY. I think we should have an end date to the election, and the end date to the election should be Election Day.

Mr. MORELLE. Do you feel the same way about taxes also? The IRS should not accept anything that is postmarked before—

Ms. LANDRY. I do not think the IRS is the same thing because they are not waiting to report a result of income tax collections. Whereas the whole State is waiting for us to report the results of an election, and we need to give them the timely results to secure the confidence in our elections.

Mr. MORELLE. I yield back.

Chair LEE. I now recognize the gentleman from North Carolina, Dr. Murphy, for 5 minutes for the purpose of questioning our witnesses.

Dr. MURPHY. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Thank you all for coming today.

I think everybody in this room wants pre-fair, safe elections. I think that is uniform. I think there is very much consensus about that. How that happens I think there may be a little bit of disagreement.

This is why, you know, I think our House passed the SAVE Act. That requires States to prove citizenship before registering an individual to vote and to remove noncitizens from existing voter rolls.

You know, the question is why do people fear that? Because here in Washington, D.C., they passed a law which had to be reversed or passed a rule, or whatever they call it here in the county or the city, that would have allowed people from the Chinese Embassy to come and vote.

In New York, they wanted noncitizens to be able to vote. There is precedent in this country that is justified fear for being able to say they—am I not coming on? Do I need to speak louder? OK. Good.

Anyway, long and short, there is, I think, justified fear for people saying, Hey, we want noncitizens not to vote in our elections.

Secretary LaRose, in your testimony you mentioned that Ohio requires voters to present a Government-issued photo ID to vote, and your State requires driver's licenses and State IDs. Can you tell us how this has safeguarded the elections in Ohio?

Mr. LAROSE. Thank you, sir.

By just proving that people are who they say they are when they come to vote. By the way, the vast majority of Democrats and Republicans support this. Ohio provides a free ID if you do not have one. We even have a religious exemption for that very small minority that does not allow them to be photographed. They may not have a State ID. We cover all the bases.

Our State ID has an indication on it that says whether you are a citizens or not. Shockingly, I actually had to go to court last year and defend that because there was a group saying that we should give people a ballot, even if they give us an ID that says noncitizen.

Dr. MURPHY. Amazing.

Ballot harvesting requires a lot of attention and for good reason—receives a lot of attention and for good reason. Fraudulent actions committed by third-parties are a threat.

Can you tell me what election security initiatives do you find to be the most effective in reducing fraud in these third-party collection of mail-in ballots?

Mr. LAROSE. Well, Ohio recently outlawed the prepopulating of these forms by some of these third-party organizations because in many cases, they were sending out prepopulated forms with inaccurate information on them. Now you have to fill the form out yourself.

We also have strict rules around the use of so-called drop boxes or secure receptacles. Whereas only the voter may return their ballot. If you are returning somebody else's ballot, which Ohio law allows you to do for a family member or a disabled person, in those cases, you just have to come inside and present it to the election official.

Dr. MURPHY. You have to present an ID if you bring in somebody else's ballot, a family member?

Mr. LAROSE. No, but you do have to sign an affidavit that says that you have been designated by a disabled Ohioan to return their ballot. That has, obviously, the power of law behind it.

Dr. MURPHY. All right. Thank you.

Secretary Landry, in your testimony you shared that your Governor issued a directive requiring the Office of Motor Vehicles to share information on noncitizens who hold Louisiana driver's license or ID.

How can illegal immigrants take advantage of automatic voter registration, particularly when they come in contact with the State DMV?

Ms. LANDRY. In Louisiana, illegal immigrants are not allowed to get a driver's license. Only those here legally can get a driver's license. We previously did not have access to that information. Governor Landry, our Governor now, ordered the DMV to provide that information to us, and it allows us to now audit our voter rolls to see if there are noncitizens on the voter rolls.

It is not enough. There is still information that we need, and getting access to the SAVE data base will allow us to find even more people who may be on our rolls who are not citizens.

Dr. MURPHY. You know, I have worked in some other countries during election periods, just playing doctor, like I do sometimes, and I think it is a good look for this country, that we want voters to be citizens, and we want our elections to have integrity.

Secretary McGrane, your office has been sued for removing college student identification cards from the approval list of voter IDs for voter registration. How did that happen? What happened there?

Mr. MCGRANE. We—Idaho, 2 years ago, updated its voter ID requirements to register to vote, and I think to the core how did it happen, I am not sure. Like was mentioned earlier—

Dr. MURPHY. Did it affect turnout?

Mr. MCGRANE. It did not affect turnout. Actually, in this last election, overwhelmingly, so 98.1 percent of Idaho voters showed an Idaho driver's license or ID card when they voted. It does not affect—students as well use driver's licenses.

Dr. MURPHY. Yes, they drive.

Mr. MCGRANE. Yes.

Dr. MURPHY. Thank you.

Chair LEE. I now recognize the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. Johnson, for 5 minutes for the purpose of questioning our witnesses.

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this hearing. You know, Texas is the hardest State in the union to vote, and some would say we have been assaulting the right to vote in our State for quite some time. I have seen firsthand how troublesome it is to make voting difficult.

I want to address the previous question on student ID. You go through the university process, right, Ms. Thomas, when you go to admit to a university, you have to submit birth certificates, you have to submit all things about who you are to get that student ID. Why in the world would we not want students—the whole point of ID is here is a picture, here is who you are. Are you who you say you are to go vote? What in the hell is wrong with using a student ID to vote?

Ms. THOMAS. Nothing.

Ms. JOHNSON. I agree with you. Absolutely nothing. Most of our State universities paid for by the taxpayers to make sure that they know who their students are. When they issue a student ID, the problem without using student ID is a lot of young people, for what reasons are beyond me, they do not get a driver's license.

I mean, I remember my son, my oldest son, when he turned 16, he decided he did not need a driver's license because I could drive

him. I thought, Well, that is a huge problem. I am not your chauffeur, sir. I can get you a bus pass, or you can decide to get your driver's license. He miraculously decided to get a driver's license.

I am constantly amazed at how many young people do not get a driver's license right now. I do not understand why in the world we would not want to use student IDs. That is an argument of why I think what makes this whole voter integrity discussion somewhat disingenuous because, yes, we want to make sure American citizens vote. Absolutely. There is no disagreement amongst party lines that we want citizens to vote. The disagreement comes in how easy are we going to make it for those citizens to vote.

What it seems like right now with the SAVE Act and the legislation that comes through, we are more interested in making it harder for people to vote in the name of rooting out 32 people who may have improperly voted, as opposed to making it possible for 20 million people to vote.

You know, my question is, you know, when we have—the other problem is we have a lot of people born in rural Texas. We have a lot of people born in places where they do not necessarily have access to their documents. They do not have this, but they are citizens. What are we doing to make it easier for these people to vote? What about people with disabilities? You know, how are we making it possible for people to go in person and vote? Ms. Thomas, does Connecticut have online voter registration?

Ms. THOMAS. We certainly do, and that is how 33 percent of our voters register.

Ms. JOHNSON. That makes it easier for people who are seniors, people who may be homebound for whatever reason. Maybe you are part of the sandwich generation where you are caring for young kids, you are working, you are caring for senior families to be able to participate in our democracy.

It seems to me that States like Texas that do not allow online voter registration, which is insane to me, are more concerned about people who may not vote Republican to keep them from voting because it disproportionately affects young people who trend more progressive on average, and it disproportionately affects poor people, and it disproportionately affects people of color to not be able to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

What is very frustrating to me in this building with this whole election integrity discussion is it seems that people on the other side of this aisle are not committed to ensuring that people have the right to vote in this country. We were making it so hard. You want to say something.

Ms. THOMAS. I was just going to say, it also helps election workers. I would love for this Congress to actually spend its time fighting for American citizens. We know for a fact that there are more women who have changed their last name, more young people, more people living in nursing homes, more people serving in our military overseas than there are noncitizens voting. When are we going to prioritize American citizens instead of making them jump through hoops.

Ms. JOHNSON. I completely agree. We should be doing everything we can to make sure every American citizen can cast their constitutional right to vote.

Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record four letters in opposition to the SAVE Act. The first one is the Brennan Center for Justice; the second from the American Civil Liberties Union; the third from that voice; and the fourth from the legal conservation voters, all in opposition to the SAVE Act and the barriers and burdens it will place on millions of Americans' ability to register to vote and participate in our democracy. With that, I yield back.

[The letters referred to follows:]

**BRENNAN
CENTER**
FOR JUSTICE

March 28, 2025

Re: Oppose the SAVE Act, H.R. 22

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the Brennan Center for Justice, I strongly urge you to oppose the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, H.R. 22. This would be the worst voting bill to be passed by Congress in memory, likely ever. It would restrict the freedom to vote for millions of eligible American citizens. It must be defeated.

The SAVE Act would require every American essentially to produce a passport or birth certificate each time they register or re-register to vote. This could block millions of American citizens from voting. More than 21 million American citizens do not have their passport or birth certificate readily available. Only about half of American adults have a passport, and millions lack easy access to a paper copy of their birth certificate. Some Americans are especially likely to lack these documents, including the millions of married women who change their names (so their documents don't match), younger voters, and voters of color.

We've seen this before. When Kansas and Arizona tried to implement their own proof-of-citizenship requirements for voting, they blocked tens of thousands of eligible American citizens from registering. This year in New Hampshire, which recently enacted a similar requirement, eligible voters have already been turned away at the polls because they didn't have citizenship papers on-hand. Amid the push to nationalize this disastrous policy through the SAVE Act, Kansas's Republican secretary of state (the state's chief election official) has urged against following that path, noting that "Kansas did that 10 years ago. It didn't work out so well."

In addition, the SAVE Act would eliminate or upend most methods of registering to vote. Mail and online registration would be essentially abolished, as would voter registration drives that add hundreds of thousands of citizens to the rolls every election cycle. Automatic voter registration would be severely limited in states across the country. The bill would also direct states to purge their voter rolls based on faulty data and without appropriate guardrails, like requiring officials to notify voters before removing them from the list. In 2024 alone, we saw these kinds of reckless purge attempts sweep in thousands of eligible American citizens in Alabama, Ohio, Virginia, and Texas.

The bill would also impose an unfunded mandate on election officials, saddling them with the responsibility of hashing out the practical details, leaving them to cover the costs, and threatening them with criminal and civil penalties if they get things wrong.

There are already checks in place to ensure that only eligible citizens can vote. Studies show only U.S. citizens vote, and the exceptions are vanishingly rare. State-level investigations into voter rolls have repeatedly confirmed that fact. The bill solves nothing: it is a solution in search of a problem.

As the President illegally tries to enact the SAVE Act by decree, Congress is being asked to double down on these attacks on the freedom to vote through legislation. A vote for this misguided measure would be a vote to potentially block millions of eligible American citizens from participating in our democracy. It would be the first time I'm aware of that Congress intervened to take that essential right away from millions. I urge you to oppose the SAVE Act.

Best regards,



Michael Waldman
President and CEO

January 10, 2025

RE: Vote NO on H.R. 22, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act

Dear Representative:



**National Political
Advocacy Department**
915 15th Street, NW, 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20005-2112
aclu.org

Deirdre Schiffeling
Chief Political &
Advocacy Officer

Anthony D. Romero
Executive Director

Deborah N. Archer
President

The American Civil Liberties Union strongly urges you to oppose H.R. 22, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, and will score this vote. This bill would amend the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) to require potential voters to produce documentary proof of citizenship in order to register to vote in federal elections. This legislation adds significant new barriers to exercising the fundamental right to vote based on unfounded fears of significant noncitizen voting. Instead of pursuing baseless legislation that makes it harder for eligible voters to vote, Congress should instead advance legislation like the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act to increase access to the ballot.

The SAVE Act is entirely unnecessary and only serves to harm voters. There is no evidence of any pervasive or widespread voting by those who are ineligible to vote, including those who are not citizens. Existing federal law already prohibits voting in federal elections by noncitizens.¹ Moreover, all individuals must already swear under penalty of law to their citizenship when registering to vote. This bill would erect significant additional barriers to voting and prevent eligible voters who do not have ready access to citizenship documents like birth certificates or passports - often due to logistical and financial barriers - from participating in our democracy. In fact, a recent study found that more than 21 million Americans lack easy access to proof-of-citizenship documents that this bill would require.² When Kansas enacted a similar law over a decade ago, a federal court found it unconstitutional based on the severe burden it placed on qualified Kansans attempting to register – over 30,000 of whom, 12% of applicants, were unfairly denied the ability to register.³

The SAVE Act would also authorize states to engage in faulty voter list maintenance activities that would likely result in eligible voters being removed from voter lists days before an election. This would bypass the current “quiet period” under the NVRA which requires states to complete systematic list maintenance activities no later than 90 days before an election. Undercutting

¹ See 18 USC § 611

² Hanmer, M., Novey, S., Rothschild, J. (2024). *Who Lacks ID in America Today? An Exploration of Voter ID Access, Barriers, and Knowledge*. University of Maryland Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement, available at <https://cdce.umd.edu/sites/cdce.umd.edu/files/pubs/Voter%20ID%20survey%20Key%20Results%20June%202024.pdf>

³ *Fish v. Schwab*, 957 F.3d 1105 (10th Cir. 2020)

these existing voter protections could result in eligible voters being removed from voter rolls close to an election and being denied the right to cast a ballot and have it counted. If enacted, compliance with the SAVE Act would impose significant burdens and costs on state and local election officials - who are already vastly underfunded and understaffed - for no legitimate purpose. Furthermore, this bill adds criminal liability to the everyday activities of election workers - the very people who ensure that our elections work - at a time when recruiting election workers is a challenge in many localities.

This legislation is grounded in falsehoods about immigrant communities that seek to spread fear and division, as well as dissuade eligible citizens of color from exercising their constitutional right to vote. Our existing laws and election processes already work to ensure that only eligible voters can vote, and the assertion that there is widespread voter fraud has been proven false time and time again.⁴ The ACLU urges you to reject this harmful bill and the falsehoods on which it is based, and instead focus on strengthening our democracy by advancing the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act, Freedom to Vote Act, Native American Voting Rights Act, and Washington, D.C. Admission Act. Please do not hesitate to contact Xavier Persad at xpersad@aclu.org with any questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher Anders
Democracy and Technology
Division Director



Xavier Persad
Senior Policy Counsel

⁴ Famighetti, C., Keith, D., & Pérez, M. (2017). *Noncitizen voting: The missing millions*. Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law, available at <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/noncitizen-voting-missing-millions>



March 28, 2025

United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Oppose H.R. 22, the SAVE Act

Dear Representative,

The League of Conservation Voters (LCV) believes that everyone has a right to clean air, clean water, public lands, and a safe climate protected by a just and equitable democracy. Each year, LCV publishes the *National Environmental Scorecard*, which details the voting records of members of Congress. The *Scorecard* is distributed to LCV members, concerned voters nationwide, and the media.

We urge you to vote NO on H.R. 22, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility or SAVE Act.

This bill attempts to exploit harmful anti-immigrant sentiments to make registering to vote significantly harder for tens of millions of eligible citizens, including significant numbers of citizens born in the United States.

Non-citizen voting is extraordinarily rare, election administrators are already well equipped to prevent it, and existing legal penalties for it are severe. The SAVE Act purports to prevent non-citizen voting by requiring all those registering or updating their voter registration to present documentary proof of citizenship in person, such as a passport or birth certificate. Over one hundred forty million U.S. citizens do not have passports, many millions cannot readily access their birth certificates, and millions of Americans, particularly married women, do not have birth certificates showing their current legal names. Under this bill, driver's licenses would not suffice even in states with existing strict voter ID requirements.

The SAVE Act would end online voter registration, voter registration drives, and voter registration by mail. It would create significant barriers to voting for massive numbers of eligible Americans and instigate one of the biggest federal voting rights rollbacks in the history of the United States.

For all these reasons, LCV strongly urges you to vote NO on H.R. 22, the SAVE Act. We will strongly consider including votes on this legislation in our next *Scorecard*. If you would like more information, please reach out to a member of our government relations team.

Sincerely,

Gene Karpinski
President



March 28, 2025

Dear Representative,

On behalf of Vet Voice Foundation, a nonpartisan organization of nearly 2 million veterans and military families nationwide, I write to express grave concerns regarding the SAVE Act, which would create severe and unnecessary barriers to voting for military personnel, overseas citizens, and millions of other eligible voters.

As a Marine Corps veteran and former Voting Assistance Officer, I know firsthand the importance of ensuring that servicemembers can exercise their fundamental right to vote, even when stationed in remote and challenging environments.

The SAVE Act would impose significant burdens on military and overseas voters by requiring in-person proof of citizenship at a government office in the United States when registering or updating voter registration. This requirement is simply unworkable for servicemembers deployed overseas and would effectively disenfranchise those who have sworn to defend our nation.

Even for military personnel stationed stateside, the bill makes it unnecessarily difficult to register. It fails to recognize military IDs as valid proof of citizenship unless accompanied by additional service records, and it entirely excludes military voters born abroad—many of whom are the children of U.S. service members. This is an unacceptable barrier for those who serve our country.

Beyond the military community, the SAVE Act would make voter registration significantly harder for all Americans by requiring specific documentation—such as a birth certificate or passport—that many eligible voters do not readily have. Millions of Americans, particularly married women, do not have birth certificates that reflect their current legal names, and millions more do not have passports. Additionally, the bill mandates frequent and rushed voter roll purges based on unreliable data, which could result in servicemembers and other voters being wrongfully removed without timely notification, jeopardizing their ability to cast a ballot.

The SAVE Act also undermines state-led efforts to improve access to voter registration by effectively banning or restricting widely used and secure methods such as automatic voter registration, online registration, and mail-in registration. These systems have been instrumental in ensuring voter participation while maintaining election security. Furthermore, the bill places election officials at risk of severe criminal penalties for inadvertent registration errors, discouraging qualified public servants from administering elections effectively.

I urge you to oppose the SAVE Act and any other legislation that creates unnecessary barriers to the ballot box. Instead, I encourage you to come together to advance commonsense, bipartisan policies to protect election integrity while ensuring that every eligible American, especially those serving in uniform, can exercise their fundamental right to vote.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Vet Voice stands ready to support you in these efforts.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Janessa Goldbeck', with a stylized, flowing script.

Janessa Goldbeck
Marine Corps Veteran
CEO, Vet Voice Foundation

Chair LEE. Without objection, so ordered. I now recognize the gentlewoman from Illinois, Mrs. Miller, for the purpose of questioning our witnesses for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER. OK. Thank you, Chairwoman. Thank you to the witnesses for being here. I do want to address my colleague, Ms. Johnson.

You just insulted the young, the poor, the rural, and people of color by insinuating that they do not have enough wherewithal to go get a photo ID or a driver's license. Ridiculous. Voting is a privilege. Being an American citizen is a privilege. We want to make sure that American citizens are—that their votes are not being canceled out by people that are not U.S. citizens.

Ms. JOHNSON. I would like to respond anyway—

Mrs. MILLER. Anyway, I have a question for Secretary Landry.

Chair LEE. Order. Direct remarks to the witnesses. Carry on.

Mrs. MILLER. I have a question for Secretary Landry. In 2024, Louisiana enacted House bill 476 which requires that an absentee ballot delivered by a third party be accompanied by a signed statement of the voter prepared by the Secretary of State, which attests the voter authorized the postal service or commercial carrier to deliver the ballot.

Secretary Landry, why is signature verification so crucial to ballot integrity?

Ms. LANDRY. We believe that the custody of your ballot is very important; the chain of custody and keeping track of that. When you hand your ballot to somebody, you need to know who has your ballot and what they have done with it. If they are unable to deliver it themselves having—or they need assistance, we ask them to put their name and signature on there as well so that we know who has delivered the ballot, and we know that they have permission to do that.

Mrs. MILLER. What kind of consequences are there if someone does not get the voters' authorization, or they turn in something that is fraudulent?

Ms. LANDRY. There is no consequence for the voter actually. The vote is still counted. If someone is—there is a prohibition on witnessing more than one or delivering more than one. The prohibition—the penalty is on that person who did not put their name or who delivered more than one. We still count the vote, I think, in those situations where the ballot is delivered. If it is missing a witness signature, it is not counted.

Mrs. MILLER. In the last election, were you able to identify anybody that turned in some kind of fraudulent whatever attestation—

Ms. LANDRY. In the last election, though, we had a lot of complaints in election before that of people who were harvesting ballots and going into apartment complexes and offering to assist vulnerable voters, and family members had contacted our office and asked that we investigate because they felt like there was some manipulation going on with assisting with the ballots. That is what prompted that legislation.

Mrs. MILLER. Well, I think until we have severe consequences for people that are engaged in activities, you know, like what you just

described, I do not think we are going to have free and fair elections. I would like to see.

Ms. LANDRY. Right. Just to clarify, if they are missing any signatures, the ballot is not counted. If it is just something untoward or against the law that the ballot harvester is doing, that person is punished, and the vote is still counted.

Mrs. MILLER. Right. Thank you so much, and I yield back.

Chair LEE. I would like to thank our witnesses for appearing before the Committee today and for the work that you do for your communities and voters across America.

Members of the Committee may have some additional questions for you, and we ask that you please respond to those questions, if any, in writing.

Without objection, each Member will have 5 legislative days to insert additional material into the record or to revise and extend their remarks.

If there is no further business, I thank the Members for their participation. Without objection, the Committee stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:24 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

GENERAL ALLOWANCE



March, 28, 2025

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
2267 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Morelle
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
1216 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Chairman Steil, and Ranking Member Morelle,

On behalf of the Declaration for American Democracy (DFAD), a coalition of more than 260 local, state and national organizations working to strengthen U.S. democracy, and the undersigned organizations, we write in strong opposition to H.R. 22, the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act.

Congress has a constitutional responsibility to safeguard free and fair elections and ensure all American citizens can freely, securely, and easily exercise their right to vote. The SAVE Act represents a dangerous departure from fulfilling this duty, and as currently written, this bill will make it significantly harder, if not outright impossible, for millions of Republican, Democratic, and independent voters to register to vote and have their voices heard. The SAVE Act would place the burden on every single American citizen to prove their citizenship when registering to vote or updating their voter registration, chiefly by either presenting a passport or a birth certificate in person. In practice, the SAVE Act would up-end online voter registration, a practice in 42 states, make it impossible for Americans to register to vote by mail, and put an end to voter registration drives nationwide. The only feasible way for every single American citizen to register to vote or update their registration – including for an address or party change – would be to do so in person.

Federal law already states that it is illegal for non-U.S. citizens to register to vote or cast a ballot in a federal election (18 U.S.C. § 1015). It's an existing crime that is punishable by up to five years in prison. Election officials already use extensive state and federal data, including citizenship data, to verify an individual's eligibility to cast a ballot and Americans must already provide either the last four digits of their social security number or driver's license number when registering to vote to enable officials to verify their identity and eligibility.

Research indicates that more than nine percent of voting-age citizens, 21.3 million Americans, do not have proof of citizenship readily available, while at least 3.8 million do not have these documents at all due to loss, damage, or theft.¹

Data from the U.S. Department of State shows that approximately only half of all American citizens possess a passport meaning that half of all American citizens would not be able to provide one of the primary acceptable forms of documentation required by the legislation.² Nationwide, more than 140 million Americans do not possess a passport, and specifically, data indicates that approximately 3.1 million Louisiana citizens, 5.1 million New York citizens, and 3.3 million Wisconsin citizens do not possess a passport.³ Americans who have completed less education or have lower income are also far less likely to have a passport, making this a socio-economic issue that would disproportionately impact working-class Americans. Additionally, older Americans are less likely than younger citizens to have a passport.

Surveys also show that eight in ten married women have changed their surname, meaning they do not possess a birth certificate that matches their current legal name and therefore could not present it as valid proof of citizenship.⁴ Nationwide, this would mean that as many as 69 million women could not use their birth certificate to prove their identity or citizenship status.⁵ This would impact as many as 1 million women in Louisiana, 1.3 million women in Wisconsin, and 3.8 million women in New York.⁶

The SAVE Act could also prevent victims of natural disasters, such as hurricanes and wildfires, from being able to register to vote in cases where their passport or original birth certificate was lost or damaged. Citizens who move more often as well as rural citizens will also be greatly impacted by these strict requirements as they will be required to resubmit, in person, the required documentation every time they update their voter registration. Many civil rights groups have also warned that naturalized citizens and citizens of color would likely face even greater discrimination under the legislation when trying to access the ballot box.

Introduction of the SAVE Act is the most recent example of a string of schemes to make voting more difficult for citizens, while hiding behind a thin veil of disinformation promoting false narratives of wide-spread voter fraud. Even President Trump's Presidential Advisory Committee on Election Integrity was disbanded after it was not able to find evidence of widespread voter fraud in U.S. elections.⁷ Despite overwhelming evidence attesting to the integrity of federal elections, many Americans continue to voice concerns about our elections – we encourage Congress to be receptive to those concerns, but it must do so responsibly and constitutionally. Instead of proceeding with this dangerous bill, Congress should take actions that will strengthen our elections and ensure that all eligible voters have access to the ballot box.

¹Kevin Moris, Cora Henry, "Millions of Americans Don't Have Documents Proving Their Citizenship Readily Available, The Brennan Center for Justice," June 11, 2024, available at <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/millions-americans-dont-have-documents-proving-their-citizenship-readily>

²U.S. Department of State, "Return to Pre-Pandemic Passport Processing Times" December 18, 2023, available at <https://2021-2025.state.gov/return-to-pre-pandemic-passport-processing-times/>; Greta Bedekovics, Sydney Bryant, Data on Passport Possession and Marital Name Changes, Center for American Progress, <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1EttEiNIPRVH1VGhF4sK30bF75UqCzRotsxNkgwL58M/edit?gid=0#gid=0>

³Greta Bedekovics, Sydney Bryant, "The SAVE Act would Disenfranchise Millions of Citizens," Center for American Progress, January 31, 2025, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-save-act-would-disenfranchise-millions-of-citizens/>

⁴Luona Lin, "About 8 in 10 women in opposite-sex marriages say they took their husband's last name," Pew Research Center <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/09/07/about-eight-in-ten-women-in-opposite-sex-marriages-say-they-took-their-husbands-last-name/>.

⁵Greta Bedekovics, Sydney Bryant, "The SAVE Act would Disenfranchise Millions of Citizens," Center for American Progress, January 31, 2025, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-save-act-would-disenfranchise-millions-of-citizens/>

⁶Ibid.

⁷Marina Villanueva, "Report: Trump commission did not find widespread voter fraud," Associated Press, August 3, 2018, available at <https://apnews.com/article/f5f6a73b2af546ee97816bb35e82c18d>.

If you have any questions, please contact Greta Bedekovics, Associate Director of Democracy Policy at the Center for American Progress at gbedekovics@americanprogress.org and Aaron Scherb, Senior Director of Legislative Affairs at Common Cause at ascherb@commoncause.org.

Sincerely,
 215 People's Alliance
 20/20 Vision
 Accountable.US
 Action Together Northeastern Pennsylvania
 AFL-CIO
 AFT
 All On The Line
 All Voting is Local Action
 American Association of University Women (AAUW)
 American Humanist Association
 Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)
 Bend the Arc: Jewish Action
 Black Voters Matter Fund
 Carolina for All Education Foundation
 Center for Common Ground
 Center for Media and Democracy
 Chispa LCV
 Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)
 Clean Elections Texas
 Coalition on Human Needs
 Common Cause
 CommonDefense.us
 Communications Workers of America
 Courage California
 Defend The Vote Action Fund
 DemCast USA
 Democracy 21
 Democracy Maine
 Democracy Matters
 Democracy SENTRY
 Demos Action
 Eastbay Activist Alliance, Postcards
 Eden Area Interfaith Council
 End Citizens United
 Fair Fight Action
 Faith in Action
 Faiths for Safe Water
 Field Team 6

Fix Democracy First
 Fourth Branch Action
 Franciscan Action Network
 Generation Vote
 Georgia Coalition for the Peoples Agenda
 Get Free
 Greenpeace USA
 Indivisible
 Informing Democracy
 ISALAH (MN)
 Jewish Community Action
 League of Conservation Voters
 League of Women Voters of the United States
 Living Table United Church of Christ
 Living United for Change in Arizona (LUCHA)
 March to the Polls
 MarchOnHarrisburg
 Markers For Democracy
 Maryland Poor People's Campaign
 Michiganders for Fair and Transparent Elections
 Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance (MUUSJA)
 MomsRising
 MoveOn
 MOVI, Money Out Voters In
 National Action Network
 National Council of Churches
 National Council of Jewish Women
 National Wildlife Federation
 NC NAACP
 NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
 NextGen America
 North Carolina For The People Action
 Oregonizers
 OutFront Minnesota
 Peace Action
 People For the American Way
 People Power United
 Popular Democracy
 Prism
 Progress Arizona
 Project On Government Oversight
 Public Citizen
 Reboot Our Democracy
 RepresentUs
 ReSisters
 Rise Up WV
 Seed the Vote

SEIU
 Showing Up for Racial Justice
 Sister District Project
 SMART Legislation
 Stand Up America
 State Democracy Defenders Action
 Supermajority
 Take Back Christianity
 The Civics Center
 The Workers Circle
 Transformative Justice Coalition
 Transparency International U.S.
 UltraViolet Action
 Unitarian Universalist Association
 Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice
 Voices for Progress
 Voices Of Community Activists & Leaders (VOCAL-KY)
 VoPro Pros
 Voter Participation Center
 Voters Not Politicians
 WALKING TO FIX OUR DEMOCRACY
 We Choose Us
 Wisconsin Democracy Campaign
 Women of Color Coalition

Cc: Representative Chip Roy



March 31, 2025

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Chairman
Committee on Rules and Administration
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Alex Padilla
Ranking Member
Committee on Rules and Administration
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman
Committee on House Administration
1526 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Morelle
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration
570 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Opposition to the SAVE Act (H.R. 22, S. 128) – Unfunded, Operationally Unrealistic, and Legally Risky for Election Officials

Dear Chair McConnell, Ranking Member Padilla, Chair Steil, and Ranking Member Morelle:

As election officials responsible for ensuring the secure and efficient administration of elections, we write to express our strong concerns regarding the SAVE Act (H.R. 22, S. 128). This legislation places unfunded, operationally unrealistic, and legally precarious burdens on election offices across the country.

Significant Implementation Costs Without Federal Support

The SAVE Act requires voters to provide documentary proof of citizenship to election official at the time of voter registration, mandating that most applicants produce multiple forms of identification that millions of eligible voters do not possess. However, this federal mandate comes without funding to support the extensive changes required at the state and local levels, including:

- Developing and distributing new voter registration forms and processing systems;
- Training staff and poll workers to navigate complex documentation requirements;
- Establishing voter education initiatives to ensure compliance with the law.

These changes represent a major administrative undertaking that would be shouldered entirely by local election offices — many of which operate under tight budgets and limited personnel.

Operational and Legal Challenges for Election Officials

Under the act, voters are not only required to provide proof of citizenship with every voter

registration, but they must appear IN-PERSON with their proof to complete their registration rather than submitting a copy via mail or online with their registration application. This creates an extremely complex administrative burden - tracking the status of “in limbo” voters who have submitted an application that is otherwise compliant but have not yet appeared in-person with documentary proof. Most election officials or registration agencies would undoubtedly need to extend their office hours to accommodate evenings and weekend hours, as well as staff for increased in-person voter registration transactions. In states that allow Election Day registration, voters have up until the time they appear at the polling place to present the proof of citizenship, further complicating the job of Election Day workers.

Compounding this challenge, the SAVE Act exposes election officials to legal liability. The law threatens both civil and criminal penalties for errors in processing voter registrations, yet provides no clear federal guidance on implementation. This means that election officials, many of whom are part-time or seasonal workers, will be responsible for enforcing complicated new documentation rules under the threat of personal legal consequences. The result is a high-risk, high-pressure environment for election officials, deterring qualified personnel from serving in these critical roles.

Unrealistic Implementation Timeline and Increased Liability Risks

The SAVE Act mandates immediate implementation, leaving no time for election officials to develop the necessary systems and processes to comply. A comparable example is the implementation of REAL ID, which was originally set to take effect in 2008 but remains delayed 17 years later due to state-level implementation challenges. Expecting election offices to enforce complex new documentation requirements before the next federal election is impractical and will cause widespread operational challenges.

The rushed timeline will increase the likelihood of errors, which, under the SAVE Act, could result in severe legal consequences for election officials who make unintentional mistakes while processing registrations. Given the complexity of verifying documentation, election offices need extensive training and resources to comply with this law — neither of which the SAVE Act provides.

A More Effective Approach: Collaboration with Election Officials

States already have systems in place to verify voter identity, and many have backend processes to confirm citizenship status. If Congress chooses to legislate additional verification measures, such policies should be developed in consultation with state and local election administrators to ensure they are workable, cost-effective, and do not disrupt election administration or expose election officials to unnecessary legal risks.

As election officials, our priority is to conduct secure, efficient, and well-organized elections. The SAVE Act places an unfunded, unworkable, and legally risky burden on election administrators without offering the necessary resources or implementation support. We urge you to oppose this bill and instead work with election officials to develop policies that strengthen election security without jeopardizing administrative efficiency or exposing election personnel to legal liability.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further and work collaboratively toward practical solutions.

Sincerely,

Tonnie Adams
Election Supervisor, Heard County, GA

Francisco Aguilar
Nevada Secretary of State*

Aaron Ammons
Clerk and Recorder, Champaign County, IL*

Rebecca Anglin
Elections Director, Greene County, GA

Pamela M. Bacon
Clerk and Recorder, Logan County, CO

Shenna Bellows
Maine Secretary of State*

Jocelyn Benson
Michigan Secretary of State*

David Bjerke
Director of Elections and General Registrar of Voters, City of Falls Church, VA*

Jennifer Bloom
Deputy Commissioner of Elections, Ulster County, NY

Maria Boersma
City Clerk, City of Grand Haven, MI

Lilvender Bolton
Election Supervisor, Lincoln County, GA

Bruce Brown
Secretary, City of Alexandria Electoral Board, VA*

Theresa Bucci
Deputy Registrar, Cranston, RI

Barb Byrum
Clerk, Ingham County, MI*

Rachel Clements
Election Technician, Jefferson County, CO

Ethan Compton
Election Supervisor, Irwin County, GA

Maggie Conley
Democratic Deputy Commissioner, Madison County Board of Elections, NY

Kristin Connelly
Clerk-Recorder-Registrar, Contra Costa County, CA*

Brenda Corbett
Clerk and Recorder, Clear Creek County, CO

Dustin Czarny
Elections Commissioner, Onondaga County, NY*

Lisa Deeley
Philadelphia City Commissioner, PA*

Candy DeHann
Clerk, Jamestown Charter Township, MI

Tate Fall
Director of Elections, Cobb County, GA*

Omega R. Finney
Board Member, Board of Elections & Registration, Henry County, GA

Matthew Fleming
Election Commissioner, Oswego County, NY

Jill Gruppen
City Clerk, Hudsonville, MI

Jacklyn K. Harmon
Clerk & Recorder, Garfield County, CO

Marion G. Hatton
Chair, Jones County Elections and Voter Registration, GA

Meredith Hemmeke
Clerk, Port Sheldon Township, MI

Shea Hicks

Chairperson, Board of Elections & Registration, Gordon County, GA

Andrew Higby

Clerk and Recorder, DMV, Lake County, CO

Heather Jobe

County Auditor, Klickitat County, WA

Greg Kimsey

County Auditor, Clark County, WA

Carly Koppes

Clerk and Recorder, Weld County, CO*

Annie Kuntz

Clerk and Recorder, Washington County, CO

Tiffany Lee

Clerk and Recorder, La Plata County, CO

Brianna Lennon

Clerk, Boone County, MO*

Nick Lima

Registrar & Director of Elections, Cranston, RI

Shawn Luce

Clerk & Recorder, Rio Blanco County, CO

Elizabeth Maddox

Clerk, Board of Elections & Registration, Gordon County, GA

Bruce Manning

Clerk, Board of Elections & Registration, Gordon County, GA

Laura Martino

Elections Commissioner, Madison County, NY

Kirk McDonough

Chair, Board of Canvassers, Cranston, RI

Lisa McGlaun

Co-Interim Director, Athens-Clarke County, GA

Elizabeth J. McLaughlin

Commissioner, Warren County, NY

Victoria Moody

Clerk, Jones County, GA

Kathy Placencia

Director of Elections, Department of State, RI*

Taryn Power

Clerk and Recorder, Summit County, CO

Julianne Roberts

Elections Specialist, Cherokee County, GA

Rob Rock

Deputy Secretary of State, RI*

Alyson K. Roney

Chief Registrar, Jones County, GA

Paula Schermerhorn

Deputy Commissioner, Delaware County, NY

Kaitlyn Specht

Elections Deputy, Cowlitz County, WA

Ashley Torres

Commissioner of Elections, Ulster County, NY

Maggie Toulouse Oliver

New Mexico Secretary of State*

James C. E. Wahls

Election Commissioner, Tioga County, NY

Julie Wise

Director of Elections, King County, WA*

Shertanka Wright

Registrar, Lincoln County, GA

Kim Wyman

Former Washington Secretary of State

Kristen Zebrowski

Chief Election Official and Co-Executive Director, State Board of Elections, NY

*Indicates a member of Issue One's [Faces of Democracy](#) campaign

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
Members of the Committee on House Administration

Rep. Bryan Steil, Chairman
Committee on House Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Steil,

As secretaries of state representing 15 states, we write to express our deep concern regarding the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act and how the legislation threatens to disenfranchise millions of eligible American citizens - Democrats, Republicans, and independents - as well as upend election administration as we know it.

As Secretaries of State, it is our duty to ensure that Americans can securely and easily access the ballot box in order to make their voices heard. The SAVE Act would force all Americans to prove their citizenship status, in person, when registering to vote or updating their voter registration information. As election administrators, we know it is the job of election officials to verify the eligibility of citizens to cast a ballot, not the job of citizens to convince the government that they are eligible to exercise their right to vote.

If the SAVE Act became law, the vast majority of Americans would have to present a passport or original copy of their birth certificate in order to register to vote. It is gravely concerning to us that millions of eligible citizens across the country, including in our own states, do not possess the forms of documentation that would be acceptable under the legislation. Data shows that about half of American citizens ([146 million people](#)) [do not have a valid passport](#) and [69 million women who have married](#) and taken their spouse's name do not have a birth certificate they could use to prove their identity. Additionally, more than [21 million U.S. citizens of voting age](#) do not have proof of citizenship readily available at all. When Kansas enacted a law similar to the SAVE Act, [31,000 eligible American citizens](#) were blocked from registering to vote. We cannot let that happen on a national scale.

Furthermore, there are already existing laws prohibiting non-citizens from voting in federal and state elections and these are enforced to the fullest extent of the law. For more than 30 years, it has also been a requirement for Americans to provide either their driver's license number or the last four digits of their social security number when registering to vote, in order to provide election officials with the information necessary to verify their identity and eligibility.

Every election cycle tens of millions of Americans newly register to vote and tens of millions update their voter registration information. Even for minor changes, like moving

into a new unit in the same apartment complex, the SAVE Act would require already registered Americans to prove their citizenship status to election officials. In fact, every time someone moves or changes party affiliation, the SAVE Act would require them to show documentary proof of citizenship in person in order to update their registration information.

The legislation's requirement to show documentation in person would also mean that the methods of voter registration the vast majority of Americans use today would no longer be functional. Americans would no longer be able to register to vote by mailing in an application: they would still have to show proof of citizenship in person. The legislation would also cripple online voter registration systems and gut automatic voter registration that relies on digital transactions from state agencies. These methods of registration are vital to election administration and are securely and efficiently used in dozens of blue, red, and purple states.

Every federal election cycle, approximately [80 million Americans](#) register to vote or update their voter registration information. Fewer than [6% of them](#) do so in person at an election office. But under the SAVE Act, the viable way for the majority of Americans to register to vote or update their registration information would be to go to their local election office. Not only would this completely overwhelm our local clerks, it would be entirely unfeasible for millions of rural Americans and downright impossible for overseas members of the military to register to vote. In some counties, Americans would need to drive three hours round trip to get to their election office.

The SAVE Act would require local and state election offices to take on unnecessary and large financial burdens as well as create administrative inefficiency and waste on a massive scale. Online voter registration saves election offices approximately [\\$3.54 per application](#) in labor costs compared to the cost of processing a paper voter registration application. In fact, the average election office spends [\\$113,445 on staff time alone](#) to process paper registration forms. Local election clerks already work around the clock in the weeks and months leading up to elections, to fulfill their commitments to ensure safe, secure, and accessible elections. The SAVE Act would downright make their jobs impossible and waste hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars by preventing the use of efficient and reliable voter registration systems.

Lastly, in our roles as Secretaries of State, some of us also oversee our state's motor vehicle agency, including the issuance of REAL IDs. REAL IDs that have already been issued would not meet the SAVE Act's requirements for documentary proof of citizenship, as REAL IDs do not indicate citizenship status. Even if the federal laws for REAL ID were amended, the nearly 140 million REAL IDs that have been issued over the last decade could not be used as proof of citizenship. We urge you not to upend the decades-long project it has been to develop and issue REAL IDs, especially as the May 7, 2025 enforcement deadline approaches.

Just three months ago, all 50 states administered elections in a secure and accessible manner, including those that elected you to Congress. We urge you to fulfill your duty to uphold the Constitution and ensure that American citizens, including your own constituents, can exercise their right to vote. As election officials in our state, we constantly strive to ensure the integrity of elections for all voters and would be glad to work with you on federal legislation that increases election integrity while ensuring citizens maintain access to the ballot box.

Sincerely,

Gregg Amore

Secretary of State
Rhode Island

Shenna Bellows

Secretary of State
Maine

Jocelyn Benson

Secretary of State
Michigan

Adrian Fontes

Secretary of State
Arizona

Jena Griswold

Secretary of State
Colorado

Alexi Giannoulis

Secretary of State
Illinois

Sarah Copeland

Hanzas
Secretary of State
Vermont

Steve Hobbs

Secretary of State
Washington

Steve Simon

Secretary of State
Minnesota

Stephanie Thomas

Secretary of the State
Connecticut

Maggie Toulouse Oliver

Secretary of State
New Mexico

Tahesha Way

Lt. Governor &
Secretary of State
New Jersey

Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D

Secretary of State
California

Cisco Aguilar

Secretary of State
Nevada

Tobias Read

Secretary of State
Oregon

