

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