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MAKE ELECTIONS GREAT AGAIN: HOW TO RESTORE TRUST AND INTEGRITY IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

FEBRUARY 10, 2026

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MAKE ELECTIONS GREAT AGAIN: HOW TO RESTORE TRUST AND INTEGRITY IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS

February 10, 2026

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

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:20 a.m., in room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Bryan Steil [Chairman of the Committee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Steil, Loudermilk, Griffith, Bice, Carey, Lee, Miller, Morelle, Sewell, Torres, and Johnson.

Staff present: Mike Platt, Staff Director; Rachel Collins, General Counsel; Abby Salter, Deputy General Counsel; Josh Weber, Counsel; Cole Hernandez, Counsel; Jordan Wilson, Director of Member Services; Kristen Monterroso, Director of Operations; Annemarie Cake, Professional Staff and Deputy Clerk; Jamie Fleet, Minority Staff Director; Khalil Abboud, Minority Deputy Staff Director; Nikolas Youngsmith, Minority Policy Director; Sarah Nasta, Minority Senior Advisor and Director of Outreach; and Owen Reilly, Minority Senior Advisor.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BRYAN STEIL, CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM WISCONSIN

Chairman STEIL. The Committee on House Administration will come to order.

The title of today's hearing is "Making Elections Great Again: How to Restore Trust and Integrity in Federal Elections."

I note that a quorum is present.

Without objection, the Chair may declare a recess at any time.

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 Morelle, Members of the Committee, and our witnesses for participating in our hearing today.

I will now recognize myself for the purpose of making an opening statement.

Article I, section 4 of the United States Constitution grants the power to regulate the "time, place, and manner" of Federal elections. However, the Constitution also gives Congress the power to make or alter those regulations at any time.

Federal election law was last updated in 2009. In the years since, voter confidence has dropped. The Biden administration's failed immigration policies resulted in over 10 million illegal aliens pouring into our country during that time period. Some States send every registered voter a ballot. Fourteen States do not require photo identification.

This is why Congress must implement common-sense election integrity reforms. This is why I have introduced the Make Elections Great Again Act, or the MEGA Act.

Here is the top line. Elections should end on election day. You should need a photo identification to cast a ballot. You must be a citizen of the United States of America to vote in a Federal election. We need auditable paper ballots. We should not be sending ballots to people that do not request them.

These reforms alone will improve voter confidence, strengthen election integrity, and continue to make it easy to vote and hard to cheat.

This is a product of years of work and collaboration. We sought feedback from State and local election officials. We continue that dialogue here today.

Delays in election results weaken voter confidence. Thousands of ballots cannot arrive days after election day, which is exactly what I witnessed when I was at Los Angeles County Central Count days after the November 2024 election.

Noncitizens on voter rolls weaken voter confidence. We cannot allow someone to say that they are a citizen simply by registering to vote by simply checking a box—without verification.

For example, that is exactly what Ian Roberts, an illegal alien, did when he registered to vote in the State of Maryland.

Stories like this undermine America's trust in our elections. We are here to fix that.

Today you may hear Democrats make outlandish claims about these common-sense policies. Former Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer recently called these proposals "Jim crow 2.0." Leader Jeffries repeatedly referred to these policies as "voter suppression."

Those statements are false, and they insult the intelligence of the American people.

They are also the exact same arguments that were made when Georgia passed their election integrity law in 2021. As you may recall, major corporations took out full-page ads in newspapers decrying the bill. Major League Baseball moved the All-Star Game out of Atlanta.

President Biden called the Georgia law—you guessed it—"Jim Crow 2.0." Stacey Abrams, the twice-failed Georgia gubernatorial candidate, never hesitated to call it voter "suppression."

They were wrong then, as Democrats are wrong now.

In Georgia, the law passed. Georgia has held two statewide elections since. What does this tell us? We can look at the empirical data, and the data tells a far different story than the Democrats would like it to do.

Let us take a minute and review what has taken place in Georgia. Without objection, I would like to insert three news articles to the record:

"Voting is surging in Georgia despite controversial new election law" from The Washington Post—yes, The Washington Post.

Axios: "Record-breaking early voting in Georgia Senate runoff."

And Valdosta Today: "University of Georgia post-election poll dispels voter suppression myth."

All entered into the record. I encourage you to read them.

[The articles referred to follow:]

Voting is surging in Georgia despite controversial new election law

Tuesday's primary is the first big test of the legislation, which was opposed by voting rights groups and Democrats.

Updated May 21, 2022 More than **3 years ago**

By Amy Gardner and Matthew Brown

GRIFFIN, Ga. — When the Spalding County Board of Elections eliminated early voting on Sundays, Democrats blamed a new state law and accused the Republican-controlled board of intentionally thwarting "Souls to the Polls," a get-out-the-vote program among Black churches to urge their congregations to cast ballots after religious services.

But after three weeks of early voting ahead of Tuesday's primary, record-breaking turnout is undercutting predictions that the Georgia Election Integrity Act of 2021 would lead to a falloff in voting. By the end of Friday, the final day of early in-person voting, nearly 800,000 Georgians had cast ballots — more than three times the number in 2018, and higher even than in 2020, a presidential year.

Voting rights groups and Democrats say they have changed their strategies to mobilize voters under the new rules. In Spalding County, for instance, local activists moved Souls to the Polls to a Saturday, and they defiantly promised that they would work twice as hard if that was what it took to protect voter access.

"It was a direct way to send a message to the Black community that they're in charge now," said Elbert Solomon, vice chairman of the county Democratic committee. "But every day we get people walking through the door, White and Black. A lot of people are concerned about their democracy."

Defenders of the law accused Democrats, including President Biden and Stacey Abrams, the presumed Democratic nominee for Georgia governor this year, of hyping accusations of voter suppression because it resonated with their base and helped them raise money. They say the turnout numbers prove that the rhetoric around the law was false.

“Abrams and President Biden lied to the people of Georgia and the country for political gain,” Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger (R) said. “From day one, I said that Georgia’s election law balanced security and access, and the facts have proved me right.”

The state’s GOP-controlled legislature became one of the first of dozens across the nation last year to approve restrictions on how ballots are cast and counted following the 2020 presidential election, when President Donald Trump attacked, without evidence, the validity of results in six states he lost, including Georgia.

The Election Integrity Act, also known as Senate Bill 202, unleashed a furious backlash when it passed. Biden called it “Jim Crow 2.0.” Abrams accused its authors of “reviving Georgia’s dark past of racist voting laws.” The clothing retailer Patagonia condemned the bill, and Major League Baseball moved its All-Star Game out of Atlanta.

The law imposes new identification requirements for those casting ballots by mail, curtails the use of drop boxes for absentee ballots, makes it a crime for third-party groups to hand out food and water to voters standing in line, blocks the use of mobile voting vans — like the ones Fulton County used in 2020 after purchasing two vehicles at a cost of more than $700,000 — and prevents local governments from directly accepting grants from the private sector for election administration.

But much of the rhetoric directed at the bill was actually based on draft legislation that was subsequently scaled back. Local and national organizations, including the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce and Atlanta-based Delta Air Lines, had put enormous pressure on state Republicans to strip out some of the more contentious provisions. Republicans agreed to drop, for instance, language barring most Georgians from voting by mail and curtailing early voting on weekends. They even expanded early-voting hours in the final bill.

“Contrary to the hyperpartisan rhetoric you may have heard inside and outside this gold dome, the facts are that this new law will expand voting access in the Peach State,” Gov. Brian Kemp (R) said in March last year as he signed the bill, noting that every county in Georgia would have expanded early voting on the weekends for the first time in history.

Raffensperger, too, likes to point out in public speeches that voting rights groups are suing him over the new requirement to include an identification number on mail ballots, even though Minnesota has imposed a similar requirement for about a decade.

“And in case you didn’t know, Minnesota is a blue state,” Raffensperger — who, along with Kemp, is running for reelection — said in a recent speech to local business leaders in Savannah. “We are a red state. And so we are both using the same process.”

Some voters interviewed at polling locations said they were unwilling to take any chances with the new ID requirement. They opted to vote in person this year because they were afraid their ballot might be rejected under the requirement. With drop boxes now required to be inside of polling locations rather than curbside, and accessible only during voting hours, it's just as easy to vote in person, they said.

"They made it hard," said Preston Wallace, a retiree from Chamblee who voted by mail in 2020 but chose to do so in person this year. "I'm not certain about the drop-offs, or if the mail is going to get picked up on time. I just don't trust it. I didn't want to take any chances."

Turnout numbers for early and mail voting in Tuesday's primary show a dramatic drop in mail voting over 2020, when the primary was conducted during the early months of the coronavirus pandemic. Roughly one-third of early voters cast their ballots by mail that year, while this year that figure has dropped to 8 percent.

At a public library in Dunwoody, in the northern Atlanta suburbs, polling manager Renata Fleming said that in the weeks ahead of Election Day in 2020, the mail-ballot drop box was filled with scores of ballots at the end of each day when teams of election workers emptied it. This year, a log taped to the side of the drop box listed the numbers of ballots collected in the first two days of activity. On May 3, the number was eight. The next day, it was three.

However, state election officials said comparing mail voting numbers this year to a presidential election during a pandemic is misleading. They said some of the drop in mail voting is to be expected, given that Georgia was never a big vote-by-mail state before the pandemic hit. In the 2018 midterm primary, for instance, 7 percent of early votes were mail ballots — slightly less than the percentage this year.

"Before the pandemic, Georgians voted in person at the same rate they're voting in person now," said Raffensperger spokesman Ari Schaffer. "What we're seeing is a return to pre-pandemic normal. It may contradict the 'voter suppression' narrative, but those are the facts."

Voting rights groups said they have stepped up their voter registration and education efforts to ensure that Georgians know how to vote under the new rules and are not afraid to do so. With 95 percent of eligible voters actually registered, Georgia currently boasts the highest registration rate in the nation, and voting groups take some of the credit for that.

The requirement that prohibits third-party groups from distributing food or water to voters waiting in line drew sharp criticism last year. Activists are gearing up to work around that rule by setting up tables away from long lines and encouraging voters to step off the line — and for their neighbors to hold their places — if they are hungry or thirsty or weary of standing.

Cliff Albright of Black Voters Matter, a Georgia-based voting rights group, said that issue will probably be more pronounced in November, when turnout will be higher than on Tuesday. But the group is using Tuesday as a dry run, and is sending out text messages and radio ads urging voters to bring their own water, chairs and phone chargers.

"It's just going to be letting them know that because of this voter suppression law, they need to be more mindful about being prepared for long lines," Albright said.

Paul Glaze, a spokesman for the New Georgia Project, a voter registration group founded by Abrams, said there is already evidence of the chilling effect of Senate Bill 202. He said an internal analysis found a 400 percent increase in mail-ballot-application rejection rates in last year's municipal elections, which took place after the new law was implemented. He also noted that the bill's provision allowing any voter to challenge registrations led to an attempt in Forsyth County to reject the registration of 13,000 voters.

The county's elections board removed only a handful of the registrations after the New Georgia Project sent a letter warning of the legal consequences of removing voters from the rolls without sufficient evidence.

In Griffin, Republicans gained a majority on the Spalding County Board of Elections last year and decided this spring to eliminate Sunday voting, as allowed under the new state law. Since then, local Democrats have mobilized around the issue of voting rights, holding registration drives and expanding their membership.

The party teamed up with Black Voters Matter this month to host a Mother's Day-themed voter registration festival at a Griffin laundromat. With the business's recently unveiled mural of the late congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis as a backdrop, the group hoped the event would help energize the surrounding community, which is predominantly Black.

"This area specifically is not known for getting out and voting," said Vett Johnson, the laundromat's owner. "If we encourage the areas that haven't gotten out, then maybe we'd get a better representation of the people who are here and then they'll feel they have more of a voice and would be a little bit happier about the politics."

Republican members of the Spalding elections board did not respond to requests for interviews. But in a letter provided to The Washington Post, the board chairman, Ben Johnson, denied that the elimination of Sunday voting was racially motivated. He noted that Spalding is now required to offer early voting on two Saturdays, rather than just one, so the elimination of Sunday voting does not reduce the overall number of weekend early-voting days.

Johnson also pushed back on the idea that Souls to the Polls is a long-standing tradition in Spalding, with Sunday voting having existed for only a few years.

"The optional Sunday voting days are intended to be used in the event that there are extended wait times to vote, necessitating the addition of the optional advance voting days," he wrote. "Spalding County does not and has not had any extended wait times at polling locations to as yet justify the addition of the optional Sunday overflow advance voting days."

Patsy Reid — 70 years old, Black and retired — said she was surprised she didn't encounter problems when she voted early this month. Reid cast her ballot for Abrams in the Democratic primary but feared that her vote could be discounted given reports of voter suppression against people of color in Georgia.

"I had heard that they were going to try to deter us in any way possible because of the fact that we didn't go Republican on the last election, when Trump didn't win," Reid said. "To go in there and vote as easily as I did and to be treated with the respect that I knew I deserved as an American citizen — I was really thrown back."

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Nov 30, 2022 - Politics & Policy

Record-breaking early voting in Georgia Senate runoff

Emma Hurt

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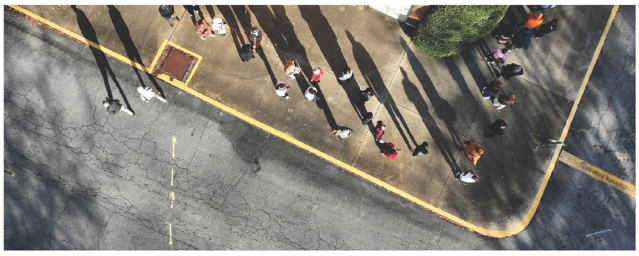

Voters line up to cast their ballots on Nov. 26 in Decatur, Ga. Photo: Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

Georgia has seen record-breaking early vote turnout ahead of its Dec. 6 Senate runoff between incumbent Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.) and Republican Herschel Walker.

Driving the news: The Peach State set a new record for daily turnout during early voting on Tuesday, after setting the previous record on Monday.

What's happening: While the state's general election had three weeks of early voting, this shortened four-week runoff just has one week.

The big picture: As of Tuesday evening, more than 800,000 Georgians had voted in the runoff — which will define whether Democrats expand their Senate majority with a pivotal additional seat or whether the 50-50 majority remains for the remainder of President Biden's term.

- Turnout in November nearly hit 4 million ballots cast.

Of note: Some counties are updating early voting wait times in real-time. Check before you go:

- Gwinnett
- Cobb
- Clayton
- Forsyth
- Richmond

Catch up quick: Warnock and Democratic groups won a battle last week over the legality of an extra day of early voting on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Republican groups had appealed to try to block voting on that day.

- It ultimately saw more than 70,000 Georgians cast their votes across nearly 30 counties.

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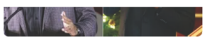

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Nov 9, 2022

Crucial Georgia Senate race heads to Dec. 6 runoff

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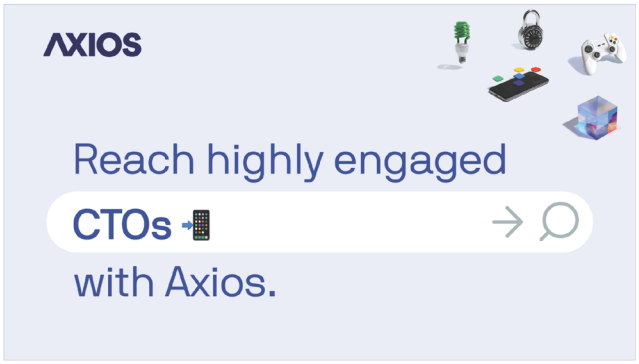

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UGA post-election poll dispels voter suppression myth

ATLANTA – A UGA independent post-election poll dispels the myth of voter suppression in Georgia with voters reportedly satisified.

Release:

Following the tireless claims of voter suppression from Democrats and the mainstream media over SB 202, an independent post-election poll conducted by the University of Georgia paints a much different picture according to Georgia voters.

The post-election survey proves that Georgia voters were satisified with their voting experience:

> Over 90% of voters feel it was easy to cast their ballot
>
> 3/4 of voters waited less than 10 minutes
>
> 95% of voters had “excellent” or “good” voting experiences

“Yet again, the myth of voter suppression in Georgia fails to be supported by a shred of evidence,” said Governor Brian Kemp. “Democrats have juiced this lie for every cent it was worth, disparaging our state and undermining faith in our elections. But the facts are clear: Georgia’s Election Integrity Act made it easy to vote and hard to cheat. It is past time for President Biden and his allies to apologize to the people of Georgia and request the Department of Justice withdraw their ridiculous lawsuit against the state.”

The independent Georgia survey referenced in the last article I think is really important to explore further.

The University of Georgia did a large and substantive review of the Georgia 2022 general election after the election integrity legislation was passed.

Ninety-five percent of voters reported "excellent" or "good" in their experience of the election, and that positive impression was across all key demographic groups. That is important, because, notably, zero percent of Black voters reported a "poor" or negative experience in the State of Georgia statistically. Additionally, 75 percent of voters waited less than 10 minutes in line to cast a ballot.

What does all this mean?

The common-sense reforms House Republicans are proposing today will ensure it remains easy to vote but hard to cheat.

Elections should end on election day.

You need a photo ID to cast a ballot.

You need to be a citizen to vote.

You need an auditable paper trail.

You should not mail a ballot to people that do not request them.

These are common sense. That is why they are popular. It is time we make them standard in American elections.

Today we have an opportunity to have this conversation and to move forward on real and substantive election integrity in the United States.

I thank our witnesses for being here today.

I now will recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle, for 5 minutes for the purpose of providing his opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Steil follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION BRYAN STEIL

Article I, section 4 of the United States Constitution grants the power to regulate the "time, place, and manner" of Federal elections. However, the Constitution also gives Congress the power to make or alter those regulations at any time. Federal election law was last updated in 2009. In the years since, voter confidence has dropped. The Biden administration's failed immigration policies resulted in over 10 million illegal aliens pouring into our country during that time period. Some States send every registered voter a ballot. Fourteen States do not require photo identification.

This is why Congress must implement common-sense election integrity reforms. This is why I have introduced the Make Elections Great Again Act, or the MEGA Act.

Here is the top line. Elections should end on election day. You should need a photo identification to cast a ballot. You must be a citizen of the United States of America to vote in a Federal election. We need auditable paper ballots. We should not be sending ballots to people that do not request them.

These reforms alone will improve voter confidence, strengthen election integrity, and continue to make it easy to vote and hard to cheat. This is a product of years of work and collaboration. We sought feedback from State and local election officials. We continue that dialogue here today. Delays in election results weaken voter confidence. Thousands of ballots cannot arrive days after election day, which is exactly what I witnessed when I was at Los Angeles County Central Count days after the November 2024 election.

Noncitizens on voter rolls weaken voter confidence. We cannot allow someone to say that they are a citizen simply by registering to vote by simply checking a box—without verification.

For example, that is exactly what Ian Roberts, an illegal alien, did when he registered to vote in the State of Maryland. Stories like this undermine America's trust in our elections. We are here to fix that. Today you may hear Democrats make outlandish claims about these common-sense policies. Former Senate Majority Leader

Chuck Schumer recently called these proposals "Jim crow 2.0." Leader Jeffries repeatedly referred to these policies as "voter suppression."

Those statements are false, and they insult the intelligence of the American people. They are also the exact same arguments that were made when Georgia passed their election integrity law in 2021. As you may recall, major corporations took out full page ads in newspapers decrying the bill. Major League Baseball moved the All Star Game out of Atlanta. President Biden called the Georgia law—you guessed it—"Jim Crow 2.0." Stacey Abrams, the twice failed Georgia gubernatorial candidate, never hesitated to call it voter "suppression." They were wrong then, as Democrats are wrong now. In Georgia, the law passed. Georgia has held two statewide elections since. What does this tell us? We can look at the empirical data, and the data tells a far different story than the Democrats would like it to do. Let us take a minute and review what has taken place in Georgia. Without objection, I would like to insert three news articles to the record: "Voting is surging in Georgia despite controversial new election law" from The Washington Post—yes, The Washington Post. Axios: "Record breaking early voting in Georgia Senate runoff." And Valdosta Today: "University of Georgia post election poll dispels voter suppression myth." All entered into the record. I encourage you to read them. The independent Georgia survey referenced in the last article I think is really important to explore further.

The University of Georgia did a large and substantive review of the Georgia 2022 general election after the election integrity legislation was passed. Ninety-five percent of voters reported "excellent" or "good" in their experience of the election, and that positive impression was across all key demographic groups. That is important, because, notably, zero percent of Black voters reported a "poor" or negative experience in the State of Georgia statistically. Additionally, 75 percent of voters waited less than 10 minutes in line to cast a ballot. What does all this mean?

The common-sense reforms House Republicans are proposing today will ensure it remains easy to vote but hard to cheat. Elections should end on election day. You need a photo ID to cast a ballot. You need to be a citizen to vote. You need an auditable paper trail. You should not mail a ballot to people that do not request them. These are common sense. That is why they are popular. It is time we make them standard in American elections. Today we have an opportunity to have this conversation and to move forward on real and substantive election integrity in the United States.

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

Mr. MORELLE. Good morning.

Thank you, Chairman Steil.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

There is nothing to gain and everything to lose from hiding from the truth, because the truth is our last best line of defense—defense against an administration willing to abandon any pretense at honesty or integrity as they try desperately and corruptly to cling to power, an administration that long ago surrendered any imperative they felt to tell the truth.

When Federal agents gunned down American citizens on the streets of Minneapolis, first a mother and then an ICU nurse that had veterans as his patients, this administration's first instinct was to try to deceive the public.

Two, despite video evidence, spread false claims about the events leading up to the murders, to smear dead Americans, calling them domestic terrorists.

In the face of this dishonesty, those of us who would defend this Republic have a moral obligation to say forcefully, loudly what we know to be true, and this is what we know: Donald Trump and congressional Republicans are terrified that they will lose the next election.

The American people over and over again for the past year have rejected the President's policies at the ballot box; resounding de-

feats for Trump-aligned candidate across the country, from Virginia to Texas, and this weekend in the Speaker's home State of Louisiana.

Because President Trump has done nothing to make the lives of the American people better, nothing to make things less expensive, nothing to make us safer.

Because of these failures, Republicans know they have one hope at winning the next election:

Change the rules of the game, destroy the rule of law, and desert any last remaining shred of allegiance to the United States Constitution.

Redrawing congressional lines to make them better for Republicans, changing the rules of elections, brutalizing American citizens who exercise their rights under the U.S. Constitution.

This scheme is not just how Republicans plan to take over our elections, it is how they plan to take over our country, to irrevocably destroy the American principles of peace, prosperity, equality that we all hold dear.

I want the administration to know, and anyone who would align with them, people on this Committee, we see what you are doing. We will not let it happen.

That is why Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member Bennie Thompson and I sent a letter to this Committee and the Chairman last week. We requested the Committee hear directly from Attorney General Pam Bondi and Secretary Noem about the Trump administration's attempt to extort an American State, holding Minnesotans hostage literally at the barrel of a gun in exchange for voter file information.

If this majority cared about election integrity, why aren't we investigating this horrendous abuse of power? Why aren't we demanding answers from this DOJ, from this DHS, from the administration that, by the President's own admission, wants to nationalize elections to help Republicans win?

He says the quiet part out loud: Help Republicans win.

Today we are apparently discussing the Make Elections Great Again Act, or at least I think that is what it is about, because Republicans cannot seem to decide.

Our House colleagues have been talking about the SAVE America Act. We are voting on that bill tomorrow. Senate Republicans are talking about the SAVE Act.

Really, all these bills have the same outcome: They are the Trump elections takeover bills. We know this because the President has said so himself. He said we want to take over. We should take over the voting in at least 15 places. The Republicans ought to nationalize the voting.

Where are the Republicans who once claimed they believed in the power of States to run elections? Because these bills will destroy that State power.

This bill gives nine separate authorities to the Department of Homeland Security, the Department that has unleashed ICE and Border Patrol onto our streets, harassing and attacking American citizens to interfere in State and local elections.

Even some congressional Republicans have called on Secretary Noem to resign. Why would we give her access to personal, private information of American voters?

What is more, this bill gives Pam Bondi the power to unilaterally withhold all election funding to any State she chooses.

I ask the American people this: Do you want Donald Trump running your elections? Do you want Pam Bondi or Kristi Noem running your elections?

I want every American to know, this is not President Trump's election to take over. It is yours. He wants to take your power for himself.

You, the American people, will determine the outcome of midterm elections, not Donald Trump, not Kristi Noem, not Pam Bondi.

We see what the administration is planning, and we will stop them, even if congressional Republicans will not.

Thank you. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Ranking Member Morelle follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION JOSEPH MORELLE

There is nothing to gain and everything to lose from hiding from the truth, because the truth is our last best line of defense—defense against an administration willing to abandon any pretense at honesty or integrity as they try desperately and corruptly to cling to power, an administration that long ago surrendered any imperative they felt to tell the truth. When Federal agents gunned down American citizens on the streets of Minneapolis, first a mother and then an ICU nurse that had veterans as his patients, this administration's first instinct was to try to deceive the public.

Two, despite video evidence, spread false claims about the events leading up to the murders, to smear dead Americans, calling them domestic terrorists. In the face of this dishonesty, those of us who would defend this Republic have a moral obligation to say forcefully, loudly what we know to be true, and this is what we know: Donald Trump and congressional Republicans are terrified that they will lose the next election.

The American people over and over again for the past year have rejected the President's policies at the ballot box; resounding defeats for Trump aligned candidate across the country, from Virginia to Texas, and this weekend in the Speaker's home State of Louisiana. Because President Trump has done nothing to make the lives of the American people better, nothing to make things less expensive, nothing to make us safer. Because of these failures, Republicans know they have one hope at winning the next election: Change the rules of the game, destroy the rule of law, and desert any last remaining shred of allegiance to the United States Constitution. Redrawing congressional lines to make them better for Republicans, changing the rules of elections, brutalizing American citizens who exercise their rights under the U.S. Constitution.

This scheme is not just how Republicans plan to take over our elections, it is how they plan to take over our country, to irrevocably destroy the American principles of peace, prosperity, equality that we all hold dear. I want the administration to know, and anyone who would align with them, people on this Committee, we see what you are doing. We will not let it happen. That is why Homeland Security Committee Ranking Member Bennie Thompson and I sent a letter to this Committee and the Chairman last week. We requested the Committee hear directly from Attorney General Pam Bondi and Secretary Noem about the Trump administration's attempt to extort an American State, holding Minnesotans hostage literally at the barrel of a gun in exchange for voter file information.

If this majority cared about election integrity, why aren't we investigating this horrendous abuse of power? Why aren't we demanding answers from this DOJ, from this DHS, from the administration that, by the President's own admission, wants to nationalize elections to help Republicans win? He says the quiet part out loud: Help Republicans win.

Today we are apparently discussing the Make Elections Great Again Act, or at least I think that is what it is about, because Republicans cannot seem to decide. Our House colleagues have been talking about the SAVE America Act. We are voting on that bill tomorrow. Senate Republicans are talking about the SAVE Act. Really, all these bills have the same outcome: They are the Trump elections takeover bills. We know this because the President has said so himself. He said we want to take over. We should take over the voting in at least 15 places. The Republicans ought to nationalize the voting. Where are the Republicans who once claimed they believed in the power of States to run elections? Because these bills will destroy that State power. This bill gives nine separate authorities to the Department of Homeland Security, the Department that has unleashed ICE and Border Patrol onto our streets, harassing and attacking American citizens to interfere in State and local elections.

Even some congressional Republicans have called on Secretary Noem to resign. Why would we give her access to personal, private information of American voters? What is more, this bill gives Pam Bondi the power to unilaterally withhold all election funding to any State she chooses. I ask the American people this: Do you want Donald Trump running your elections? Do you want Pam Bondi or Kristi Noem running your elections? I want every American to know, this is not President Trump's election to take over. It is yours. He wants to take your power for himself. You, the American people, will determine the outcome of midterm elections, not Donald Trump, not Kristi Noem, not Pam Bondi. We see what the administration is planning, and we will stop them, even if congressional Republicans will not.

Chairman STEIL. The gentleman yields back.

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.

Today we have one witness panel. First, we have Wyoming Secretary of State Chuck Gray. Next, we have Michigan State Representative Ann Bollin. Next, we have Mr. Russ Nobile, senior attorney at Judicial Watch. Finally, we have Karen Brinson Bell, principal and co-founder of Advance Elections.

We appreciate all of you being with us today and look forward to your testimony.

I will now recognize Secretary Gray for 5 minutes for the purpose of giving his 5-minute opening statement.

STATEMENTS OF THE HONORABLE CHUCK GRAY, WYOMING SECRETARY OF STATE; THE HONORABLE ANN BOLLIN, MICHIGAN STATE REPRESENTATIVE; MR. T. RUSS NOBILE, SENIOR ATTORNEY, JUDICIAL WATCH; AND MS. KAREN BRINSON BELL, FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS

STATEMENT OF CHUCK GRAY

Mr. GRAY. Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

As Wyoming's Secretary of State and Wyoming's chief election official, I am pleased to testify in complete support of the Make Elections Great Again Act.

The MEGA Act creates baseline common-sense standards for integrity, security, and confidence in Federal elections across the United States.

It is also key in fulfilling President Trump's executive order preserving and protecting the integrity of American elections, of which I also stand in complete support of.

These are election integrity measures that Americans widely support, and I appreciate your work to get them to the finish line.

As a Member of the Wyoming State Legislature and now as Wyoming's Secretary of State and chief election official, I work to advance and defend the protections to our elections set forth in the MEGA Act, many of which we have successfully instituted in Wyoming, including as the lead sponsor of State legislation requiring voter ID to cast a ballot in an election in 2021, requiring documentary proof of United States citizenship to register to vote in 2025, banning rank choice voting, instituting election day deadlines for receipt of ballots, and banning the private funding of election administration, otherwise known as "Zuck Bucks."

These measures have withstood scrutiny and legal challenge and are being successfully implemented in Wyoming elections in accordance with Wyoming law. They are easy to implement, and they are right.

I want to speak specifically in support of the MEGA Act's common-sense provision to require documentary proof of United States citizenship for registering to vote in Federal elections.

Despite the worn-out cries we hear from the radical left, requiring proof of U.S. citizenship to vote is not overburdensome.

On the contrary, it is essential to ensuring enforcement of Federal law, which unambiguously requires U.S. citizenship to vote.

Requiring proof of U.S. citizenship to vote was the No. 1 priority of our administration's Election Integrity Reform Agenda announced ahead of Wyoming's 2025 legislative session.

In partnership with the Wyoming Legislature, we brought this landmark legislation into law, patterned off the requirements of both the MEGA Act and the SAVE Act to verify a person's citizenship when they register to vote through documentary proof of citizenship.

On the eve of our proof of citizenship measure taking effect, Democrat Attorney Marc Elias filed a Federal lawsuit to block this voter integrity law. Immediately our administration went to work preparing a vigorous defense.

The lawsuit over Wyoming's landmark proof of citizenship law drew national attention, attracting the support of President Trump's Department of Justice, the Republican National Committee, and Republican attorneys general, all who filed briefs in support of our position, and I thank them for their support.

We prevailed in this lawsuit. On July 22, 2025, the United States District Court for the District of Wyoming granted our motion to dismiss this Federal lawsuit, finding that Marc Elias could find no one—again, no one—who was actually harmed or could be harmed by this new election integrity law.

This is because in Wyoming, as in the rest of the country, it is easy for all eligible U.S. citizens to obtain acceptable identification proving their citizenship. The radical left's claims to the contrary are simply untrue and defy reality.

It is so important that we pass the MEGA Act to require that documentary proof of U.S. citizenship in all Federal elections so that these protections can be in place across the United States.

Now transitioning to voter ID. This widely supported election integrity reform is also simple to implement. Before we passed it,

Wyomingites would show their license at the polls even though it was not required, and every election cycle I would get calls from Wyomingites who asked me why on Earth voter ID was not required.

It became a mission to pass voter ID. After we got voter ID to the finish line in 2021, the response we have had at the polls from Wyomingites is, "Thank you. Thank you for having this basic protection of our elections."

It is easy for the necessary identification to be attained. Citizen just goes to our motor vehicle services, completes the necessary application, and the Department of Transportation takes it from there.

Now to Wyoming's deadline requiring all ballots to be received by the end of election day. When ballots are received after election day, it opens up the election process to fraud, confusion, and uncertainty.

That is why the MEGA Act's provision stating that election day is the deadline for receipt of ballots so we have uniformity and rigor around this issue is so important.

In Wyoming we are constantly striving to improve our elections and continue to work on bringing through the other reforms found in the MEGA Act. These include measures to ban ballot harvesting and institute a uniform auditable standard pen-and-paper ballot requirement.

I applaud the Committee for spearheading this work at the Federal level that has widespread support from Americans, and I stand with President Trump and you in working to achieve these goals.

Let me be clear: The MEGA Act standards are implementable, common sense, and essential to restoring the integrity and security of elections across the United States.

Thank you, and happy to stand for questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Gray follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHUCK GRAY

Wyoming Secretary of State
Chuck Gray

February 9, 2026

Bryan Steil, Chairman
Joseph D. Morelle, Ranking Minority Member
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

Re: Written Testimony of Wyoming Secretary of State Chuck Gray Before the Committee on House Administration, "Make Elections Great Again: How to Restore Trust and Integrity in Federal Elections"

Dear Chairman Steil and Ranking Member Morelle:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in complete and total support of the Make Elections Great Again Act, or MEGA Act. The MEGA Act creates baseline, common-sense standards to instill integrity, security, and confidence in federal elections across the country. It is also key in fulfilling President Trump's Executive Order Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections, of which I stand in complete and total support.

As a member of the Wyoming State Legislature, and now as Wyoming's Secretary of State and chief election official, we have successfully implemented many of the standards set forth in the MEGA Act. These include our legislation requiring Voter ID, requiring documentary proof of United States citizenship to register to vote, banning ranked choice voting, instituting election-day deadlines for receipt of absentee ballots, and banning the private funding of election administration, otherwise known as "Zuck Bucks." To date, these measures have withstood scrutiny and challenge, and are being successfully implemented in accordance with Wyoming law. And in addition to the sections of the Act that we've been able to pass into Wyoming State law, I would like to implement the other election integrity measures in the bill as well.

I want to speak specifically in support of the MEGA Act's common-sense requirement to require documentary proof of United States citizenship for registering to vote in federal elections. Despite the worn out cries we hear from the radical left, requiring proof of U.S. citizenship to vote is extremely important. It is essential to ensuring enforcement of state and federal law, which unambiguously requires U.S. citizenship to vote. It is also simple to implement.

During my time as Wyoming Secretary of State, I've been especially involved in requiring documentary proof of United States citizenship and proof of Wyoming residency to vote in Wyoming, in order to ensure that U.S. citizens, and only U.S. citizens, are able to vote in our elections. In fact, this was the number one priority of our administration's Election Integrity

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Reform Agenda, which we announced ahead of Wyoming's 2025 Legislative Session. In partnership with the Wyoming Legislature, we brought this through landmark legislation, patterned off the requirements in the SAVE Act and the MEGA Act, to require documentary proof of United States citizenship to register to vote.

On the eve of our proof of citizenship measure taking effect, the radical left, through high-profile DNC Attorney Marc Elias, filed a federal lawsuit to block this common-sense legislation from taking effect. Immediately, our administration went to work, preparing a vigorous defense through top election lawyers at the Dhillon Law Group.

The lawsuit over the landmark proof of citizenship law drew national attention, attracting the support of President Trump's Department of Justice, the Republican National Committee, and Republican Attorneys General, all who filed briefs in support of our position. I am extremely grateful to both the Trump Administration, the RNC, and all common-sense conservatives who supported our defense of this lawsuit, and recognized what it meant: proof of citizenship is not only common-sense; it is necessary to safeguarding our elections.

As we expected, we prevailed. On July 22nd, the United States District Court for the District of Wyoming granted our motion to dismiss this federal lawsuit, finding that Marc Elias could find NO ONE who was actually harmed or could be harmed by this new election integrity law. This is because, in Wyoming, as in the rest of the country, it is easy for all eligible, U.S. citizens, to obtain acceptable identification proving their citizenship. The left's claims to the contrary are simply untrue, and defy reality.

This landmark legislation remains the law of the land in Wyoming, and I stand in strong support of passing documentary proof of U.S. Citizenship in all federal elections through both the MEGA Act and the SAVE Act, so that these protections will be in place across our country.

Now transitioning to voter ID. This widely supported election integrity reform is also simple to implement. After we passed this bill in 2021, the response we have had at the polls from Wyomingites is hugely positive.

And it is easy for the necessary identification to be attained. A citizen just goes to our Motor Vehicle Services, completes the necessary application, and the Department of Transportation takes it from there.

Requiring all ballots to be received by election day is an important election integrity reform that needs to be passed, and the MEGA Act does that. When ballots are received after election day, it opens up the election process to fraud, confusion, and uncertainty. Wyoming is one of the many states that requires ballots to be received by election day, and the MEGA Act does the right thing by requiring this of all states.

I also want to speak in support of many of the uniform standards that the MEGA Act would impose on all states, which we are still pushing for in Wyoming. These include measures to ban ballot harvesting, and institute a uniform, auditable standard for pen and paper ballots.

These election integrity measurers are essential to ensuring safety and security of our votes. I applaud the Committee for spearheading this work at the federal level, and for following through the essential reforms laid out in President Trump's Executive Order Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections. I stand with President Trump, and the committee, in fighting to achieve these goals.

Let me be clear. I strongly believe that the MEGA Act's standards are implementable, common-sense, and most importantly, essential, to restoring the integrity and security of elections across the United States. As Chairman Steil has noted, the MEGA Act will restore voter confidence by implementing baseline standards that the people of the United States want, and it will also strengthen election integrity. I stand in complete and total support of the MEGA Act.

Sincerely,

Chuck Gray

Chuck Gray
Wyoming Secretary of State

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much.

I now recognize Representative Bollin for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF ANN BOLLIN

Ms. BOLLIN. Chairman Steil, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Ann Bollin, and I currently serve as the chair of the Michigan House Appropriations Committee and previously chaired the House Elections and Ethics Committee working on election policy and oversight.

Prior to that, I was a local clerk for 16 years responsible for administering elections, local, State, and Federal.

My experience has both been practical and bipartisan.

After the 2020 election as elections chair, I negotiated broad bipartisan improvements to Michigan election law, expanding options for polling locations, strengthening drop box security and chain of custody standards.

My focus has always been simple: Make it easy to vote and hard to cheat.

Today, many Americans hold real concerns about election security and fairness. This Act gives us a chance to set clear, reasonable baseline standards for Federal elections to help States deliver consistency, transparency, and trust.

The Constitution grants primary responsibility to States for the time, place, and manner of elections, and the authority exists with Congress to establish baseline standards for Federal elections.

This Act is not about Federalizing elections. It is an opportunity to approach election policy in a practical and apolitical manner.

After the extremely close, controversial Presidential election in 2000, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act because it was revealed that the U.S. lacked consistent, reliable, and modern election administration practices. Congress also acted with UOCAVA and later the MOVE Act.

These are all Federal baseline standards that supported State administration and strengthened Federal elections, and they made sense for the time.

The 2020 election revealed similar variations in election practices and laws.

Today is an opportunity for all of us to revive the trust of the American people in our elections and end this adolescent boys game of dodgeball, bringing common sense and widely supported safeguards to ensure we have fair and secure elections.

This starts and stops with solid voter rolls for U.S. citizens only. The American public is resoundingly in support of this. Eighty-three percent support only U.S. citizens voting and using an ID for elections.

Requiring photo ID to cast a ballot is a common-sense step that aligns with everyday life. Voter ID requirements can be implemented while ensuring access, with the goal of the requirement of clarity, security, and broad participation by those who are eligible to vote.

When voters know that everyone is playing by the same rules, trust grows. That trust benefits everyone.

Adopting photo ID protocols nationally should be an essential element of our elections. Photo IDs should be current, and current should be clearly defined. Photo ID protects the voter and the election administrator.

Voter registration is the foundation of accurate voter rolls. The MEGA Act's emphasis on citizenship verification at the time of registration reflects a very basic principle: Federal elections are for United States citizens.

Documentary proof of citizenship when registering would create a clear and consistent standard across States. Registration should not be considered complete without this proof. Suggesting this will harm certain demographics is both disingenuous and insulting.

Nationally, we just completed the REAL ID process which showed nationwide identity verification efforts can be implemented thoughtfully and effectively.

Registration list maintenance should include cross-check verification. Access to cross-checking data should remain with election administrators and never be transferred to third parties.

Government data sources can assist in this effort as a clear and usable pathway for States to manage their voter rolls.

Accurate voter rolls are the bedrock of secure elections. Federal baseline standards, including list maintenance, can support States in carrying this out consistently.

Baseline standards can generate better protections and improve election administration, supporting quality control. Standardized post-election and performance audits can help improve administration by enabling early identification of procedural shortfalls before they become a problem.

Key ballot standards are paramount. Paper ballots with numbered stubs should be used in all elections. They should be printed with safeguards, such as bar codes or watermarks, to prevent fraudulent ballots.

Ballot and voter harvesting should be treated as harsh offenses with stiff penalties.

In-person election day voting and early voting should be limited. All mail-in ballots should be considered absent voter ballots. They should require an application, stating a reason and a wet signature.

Too many States have removed the application requirement creating opportunities for fraud. All application and ballot activities should be date and time stamped by an election official consistent with Federal regulations.

A thorough chain of custody from start to finish ensures the greatest level of integrity for a recount, the canvass, the certification, or post-election audits.

Efforts to reestablish Federal baseline standards will take commitment. As Michigan House appropriations chair, I am compelled to encourage adequate funding for our elections, not third-party funding.

I generally do not welcome Big Brother, but I do think elections should be considered key infrastructure if we are to avoid systematic overhaul of our elections by States through ranked choice voting, QR code voting, ballots on demand and the like. Consideration

of funding contingent upon compliance with the Act accelerates its implementation.

Finally, the MEGA Act provides an opportunity to establish practical nationwide baseline standards for Federal elections while respecting the rules of States administering them.

With thoughtful implementation, we can make elections work better for voters, election officials, candidates, and our country to ensure every eligible voter can vote freely, secretly, independently, and securely.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share my perspective, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Bollin follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANN BOLLIN

Committee on House Administration
Written Testimony – Make Elections Great Again

February 10, 2026
Representative Ann M. Bollin
Chair of House Appropriations
District 49, State of Michigan

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on what is referred to as the MEGA Act. It is an honor to present before you and I look forward to your thoughtful consideration.

I first want to begin with providing you with my background to give you a perspective of where I am coming from. I believe I bring a unique perspective based on my experience of administering elections as a local clerk for close to 20 years and my tenure as a legislator living through the disruption, division, distrust and still debated 2020 election as the House Chair of Elections and Ethics immediately following the election.

In Michigan, elections are administered at the local level by more than 1600 local clerks. I served in a community that would be considered a 'small, large' community. Regardless, the standards should be the same and the laws are intended to be followed. While it brings challenges, voters have more trust in their local officials than their state or federal electeds. Michigan was ONCE known for its robust election laws that provided the necessary checks and balances leading to public confidence in the results. Michigan election law closely followed federal law which eased confusion for both voters and election administrators. With Michigan's passage of two constitutional amendments brought forth by citizen petitions, we have seen the safeguards and checks and balances removed or ignored for the sake of convenience.

Our country is at a crossroads. Public trust is at an all-time low. Confidence in our elections is being questioned. We are living in a post-2020 divisive political climate due to the disruptions to our voting processes under the guise of COVID-19 and forcing the continued debate on what the best procedures are to ensure it is easy to vote and hard to cheat.

That is why the provisions under this Act are so important. This Act is not about federalizing our elections. It is about ensuring every ELIGIBLE VOTER CAN VOTE FREELY, SECRETLY, INDEPENDANTLY AND SECURELY. This is not rocket science. It should not be difficult to reach that goal if that is truly what the goal is.

I won't get into a debate of the issues leading up to and greatly impacting the dismay with the 2020 election, but I do think it is important to recognize some of the reasons for the chaos that followed. Each state has the authority to determine the time, place and manner of elections while there are also federal laws that must be followed for a federal election. Media started reporting based on exit interviews, percent of voter turnout versus number of

registered voters versus number of active registered voters. Compound this with different laws for mail-in ballots, provisional ballots, early voting, etc. and you can see why we have been on a high-speed collision course of confusion driven by sound bites rather than sound policy.

History shows that this can be a pivoting moment for our great nation to come together to fight for fair and free elections for all U.S. citizens.

It has been done before. More than once. In 1993, the NVRA was established to enhance voting opportunities for every American.

In the aftermath of the hanging chads and the controversies of the 2000 presidential election, America came together in strong bipartisan fashion and adopted the Help America Vote Act also known as HAVA in part because it was revealed that the U.S. lacked consistent, reliable, and modern election administration practices. It was an attempt to restore public confidence, and it established three consistent and important elements to restore confidence in our elections requiring each state to establish a statewide centralized voter registration database, upgrade voting systems for electronic tabulation, and providing accessible voting equipment.

Washington saw this as an opportunity to come together – What I would call a reset.

Fast forward to today – I believe this is where we are again. Every one of us should set politics aside and come together for the American people. The people we all represent. We should all want to restore public trust and confidence in our elections. AND that is exactly what the Make Elections Great Again Act will do.

We **have come together** for NVRA, HAVA, the MOVE ACT, UOCAVA – **we can come together again** to fine tune these for today's modern times and to enhance election integrity and restore public trust and confidence.

I understand election integrity is a broad divisive term that incites prejudices – If you are for it, you are labeled a MAGA or an election denier – if you are not – you are labeled with DTDS.

This is not a partisan issue. It is an opportunity to let the American people know we are listening, to get back to the basics and lead this country back to its greatness by establishing some common ground instead of what seems to be more like an adolescent boys' game of dodge ball.

Committee on House Administration
Written Testimony – Make Elections Great Again

February 10, 2026
Representative Ann M. Bollin
Chair of House Appropriations
District 49, State of Michigan

Fair and secure elections start and stop with a **solid voter roll**. Working together to establish NEW baseline federal standards and acknowledging the resources needed can be instrumental to moving us all forward.

Let's start with U.S. citizens only. The American public is resoundingly in support of this – 83% support this **and** photo id to register.

Having a robust and thorough check at the beginning of the process allows for a fluent voter roll and efficiency during an election.

Requiring Photo ID for Voting

Requiring photo identification to cast a ballot is a commonsense step that aligns with everyday life. Americans show ID to buy cough medicine, board a plane, open a bank account, or pick up groceries. Presenting identification at the polls strengthens confidence that each ballot is tied to an eligible voter. It PROTECTS THE VOTER.

States can implement voter ID requirements while ensuring access. Provisional ballot processes, outreach, and free state issued identification cards can help eligible voters meet the requirement. The goal is clarity and security, AND broad participation by those eligible to vote.

When voters know that everyone is playing by the same rules, trust grows. That trust benefits everyone.

Michigan Photo ID requirements were upheld by the courts in July of 2007 and went into effect for the November election without delay or problems. While Michigan has a provision that the voter not in possession of a photo id could sign an affidavit; very few did. This does not carry a heavy burden for anyone.

Acceptable Forms of Photo ID Should be Consistent Across States

Identifying acceptable forms of Photo ID nationally should be an essential element of this legislation. Student IDs should not be expressly prohibited and I would also encourage adding that the ID be current including the definition of current.

Cross-checks and Verification

Another key element is a cross-check verification. If information such as a driver's license number or social security number is required, we must be sure that the law also includes the requirement that it actually be verified by the election official every time.

Requiring Photo ID for voting should not be controversial. It helps PROTECT THE VOTER and the election administrator.

Voter Registration Standards

Voter registration is the foundation of election integrity. A strong system begins with accurate information about who is eligible to vote in federal elections.

The MEGA Act's emphasis on citizenship verification reflects a basic principle. Federal elections are for United States citizens. Requiring documentary proof of citizenship at the time of registration would create a clear and consistent standard across states.

To suggest that this will harm certain demographics including married women and low-income voters is disingenuous and insulting. Our country recently completed the REAL ID process, which shows that nationwide identity verification efforts can be implemented thoughtfully and effectively. Michigan's very own Jocelyn Benson bragged on more than one occasion how easy the process was and the high percentage of Michiganders that had completed the process.

Registration and ongoing election verification should serve different purposes. At registration, election officials should collect and verify key information such as legal name, date of birth, last four of a social security number, citizenship, and a physical residential address or description of non-traditional housing to be used as their registered address. In Michigan it is required that your driver's license address matches your voter registration. A registration should not be considered complete without proof of citizenship.

Access to cross checking data should remain with election administrators and never be transferred to third parties. Nor should it be part of a back door deal to use voter registration information for any other purpose. Election administrators are trained, accountable, and operate within established legal frameworks. A clear chain of responsibility helps protect voter information, strengthens public confidence, and leads to greater integrity.

Voter List Maintenance Requirements

Committee on House Administration
Written Testimony – Make Elections Great Again

February 10, 2026
Representative Ann M. Bollin
Chair of House Appropriations
District 49, State of Michigan

Accurate voter rolls are the backbone of secure elections. List maintenance is an ongoing responsibility, and federal baseline standards can support states in carrying it out consistently.

Routine, transparent list maintenance processes help ensure that voter files reflect current residence and eligibility. When voters move, pass away, or become ineligible, states need clear tools and timelines to update their records. Cross checks with reliable government data sources can assist in this effort.

Strong voter list maintenance must include a clear and usable pathway for states to remove individuals who have remained on the rolls without any voting activity. When records sit untouched for long periods of time, confidence in the accuracy of the voter file erodes and these gaps create opportunities to cheat.

Federal baseline standards can support states in carrying out regular, structured list maintenance using reliable government data, interstate cross checks, and documented inactivity over time. When a voter has shown no activity across two federal election cycles and corroborating data indicates a move or other change in status, there should be a defined process and requirement for updating or removing that registration.

We must make sure the list of eligible voters is accurate, current, and worthy of public trust. When the foundation of the system is solid, confidence in every other part of the process grows.

Election Administration

Post-election Audits

Improving election administration and establishing baseline standards can generate better protections. Quality control through standardized post-election and performance audits will enable us to identify the shortfalls before they become a problem. Every election should be run as if you are going to a recount. A recount should never be suspended due to faulty administration.

Treatment of Ballots

Committee on House Administration
Written Testimony – Make Elections Great Again

February 10, 2026
Representative Ann M. Bollin
Chair of House Appropriations
District 49, State of Michigan

Establishing key ballot standards is paramount to the integrity of our elections. Paper ballots with numbered stubs should be used in all elections. They should be printed with safeguards such as a barcode or watermark to prevent fraudulent ballots.

Ballot AND voter harvesting should be treated as harsh offenses with stiff penalties.

In-person election day voting and limited early voting should be the standard for federal elections (state and local too). The standards for acceptance for the return of ballots should be consistent across the nation for federal elections, and it should be close of polls on Election Day.

All mail-in ballots – which should be considered absent voter ballots – should require a reason and a wet signature. Too many states have removed the application requirement and ballots are being mailed willy nilly with no verification of the voter's continued registration at that mailing address prior to sending out the ballot.

The issuance and receipt of all ballot applications and ballots should be date and time stamped by an election official. This record must be retained consistent with federal retention requirements.

There should be no reporting in any county until the entire county's results are in.

Further, a thorough chain of custody records must be kept and retained. This is critical to affirm to ensure the greatest level of integrity in the event of a recount, canvass or post-election audit(s).

Closing

Finally, these efforts will take commitment and resources. As the Michigan House Appropriations Chair, I would be remiss if I did not mention my concerns for adequately funding our elections. While I generally do not welcome BIG BROTHER, I do think that election equipment including the registration database should be considered key infrastructure. If we are to avoid systematic overhaul of our elections by states through Ranked Choice Voting, QR code voting, ballots on demand, and the like; I would encourage consideration of funding in concert with the adoption of this Act requiring compliance by all states and locals and under the scrutiny of Homeland Security audits to verify and confirm state compliance with all aspects of this Act.

Committee on House Administration
Written Testimony – Make Elections Great Again

February 10, 2026
Representative Ann M. Bollin
Chair of House Appropriations
District 49, State of Michigan

Election integrity is a broad term, and it has become a divisive label that fuels assumptions about people's motives. If someone speaks in favor of election integrity, they are branded with a "MAGA" label or called an election denier. If someone raises concerns about access, they are accused of ignoring security. That dynamic erodes trust and distracts from the shared goal of strong elections.

The MEGA Act provides an opportunity to establish practical, nationwide baseline standards for federal elections while respecting the role of states in administering them. With thoughtful implementation, we can make elections work better for voters, for election officials, and for the country as a whole to ensure every ELIGIBLE voter CAN vote FREELY, SECRETLY, INDEPENDENTLY and SECURELY.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective, and I look forward to your questions.

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much.

Mr. Nobile, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF T. RUSS NOBILE

Mr. NOBILE. Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Russell Nobile. I am an election integrity lawyer at Judicial Watch.

The core point of my testimony is simple: Public confidence in the integrity of elections is declining. The decline is not driven by lack of ballot access, but rather inadequate and lax enforcement of basic election integrity safeguards.

The data tells a clear story. Voter registration and turnout continue to go higher, and minority ballot access is at or near record levels. Historical racial disparities supporting the need to promote ballot access have largely been eliminated.

At the same time, the public strongly supports common-sense election integrity measures. Large majorities support voter ID and uniform election deadlines. They support proof of citizenship requirements and clean registration lists.

Yet, despite this consensus, many States have moved to undermine election integrity. One of the most troubling shifts has been the expansion of universal mail voting, which sends unsolicited ballots automatically to all voters regardless of eligibility.

My written testimony describes how progressive politicians proposed this very system a hundred years ago. It was a bad idea then. It remains a bad idea.

No mature democracy would adopt such an insecure voting system. Among other ills, it weakens chain of custody protections, it increases the risk of coercion, and brings that risk of coercion to people's houses, a real risk for vulnerable voters. It risks third-party interference and administrative error. It erodes public trust in elections.

Universal mail voting is bad policy in any context, but it is particularly bad when combined with inaccurate voter registration lists.

Not long ago, the Supreme Court found that 24 million registrations, about one in eight in the United States, are invalid or inaccurate, and 2.75 million people were registered in multiple States.

Dirty lists have long been the gateway for other election mischief. Take California, who Judicial Watch is suing right now on behalf of the Libertarian Party. It has both universal mail voting and dirty registration lists. Our own internal analysis found that 21 counties, with approximately 6 million voters, removed a combined 11 voters over 2 years for change of address. That is 11 voters removed from a group of 6 million, 11 over 2 years.

The NVRA imposes modest list maintenance duties on States, and it guarantees organizations like Judicial Watch access to list maintenance records so we can verify compliance with Federal law.

Many States fail under both Federal obligations. Many do not conduct meaningful list maintenance. When we simply ask them for the records to verify, as we are allowed to under Federal law, they refuse, delay, or claim the records do not exist.

Now, they are not even giving the records to the Department of Justice, where I formerly worked, and would ordinarily ask for these records from 2004 to 2010.

Those refusals are not just technical oversights. They defeat transparency, they prevent public oversight, and undermine public confidence in the election administration.

Last year Judicial Watch reported that our enforcement efforts over the years have resulted in more than 5 million ineligible registrations being removed nationwide—5 million.

Despite our success, we have barely moved the needle. Just last month, Oregon's new Secretary of State announced that they needed to remove 800,000 inactive voters in response to our lawsuit. The evidence shows that Oregon has not removed voters since 2017.

While Oregon's announcement is progress, it illustrates just how pervasive State noncompliance has become. We have other suits pending.

Finally, I address the recent trends where States are allowing ballots to arrive days and weeks after election day.

For the last 5 years, my colleagues and I have sued several States challenging this practice, and last month the Supreme Court ruled in our favor in the first case in which we represent Congressman Michael Bost in his suit against Illinois. It took 4 years to get a Federal court to say that we could sue, and finally the Supreme Court agreed.

The regressive practice of allowing ballots to roll in for days and weeks after election day is chiefly responsible for creating the banana republic-style confusion that follows American elections today.

Judicial Watch's client, Libertarian Party in Mississippi, along with the RNC, successfully sued Mississippi in 2024 over this same practice. We won.

Then yesterday we filed our brief with the Supreme Court to defend our win. The Supreme Court will hear that case on March 23. Our brief is attached in the record. Seventy-six percent of the public support it.

History explains why election integrity safeguards exist. They are not adopted by accident, and they are not racist.

Thank you for inviting me to testify today. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nobile follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF T. RUSS NOBILE

Testimony Before the United States House of Representatives
Committee on House Administration

Hearing on "Make Elections Great Again:
How to Restore Trust and Integrity in Federal Elections."
February 10, 2026

T. Russell Nobile
Senior Counsel
Judicial Watch, Inc.

Good morning, Chairman and Ranking Member.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the essential need to restore trust and integrity in federal elections.

My name is Russell Nobile. I am a Senior Attorney at Judicial Watch Inc. and part of its election integrity group. Currently, I am leading a team of Judicial Watch attorneys in several challenges to state laws permitting the counting of ballots received days—sometimes weeks—after Election Day. The U.S. Supreme Court granted certiorari in two of these cases during its October 2025 term. We represent the Libertarian Party of Mississippi in a consolidated action, challenging Mississippi's law allowing ballots to be counted if received five business days after Election Day.[1] The Court will hear arguments in this case on March 23, 2026. If successful, this case will greatly improve public trust in federal elections.

In addition to our work in Mississippi, Judicial Watch recently achieved a significant victory in Illinois.[2] By a vote of 7-2, the Court reversed a string of lower court rulings that had wrongly dismissed a challenge to Illinois' receipt deadline brought by our client, Congressman Mike Bost.

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[1] *Watson v. RNC, et al.*, No. 24-1260.
[2] *Bost et al. v. Ill. State Bd. of Elect.*, No. 24-568.

Along with my Judicial Watch colleagues, I enforce the list maintenance provisions of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 ("NVRA"), 52 U.S.C. § 20507.[3] As discussed below, we have active list maintenance lawsuits pending against Oregon, California, and Illinois.

I have been practicing as a litigator for 22 years. I have specialized knowledge and expertise in voting and election integrity. My work frequently involves the development and presentation of investigative findings concerning violations of state and federal law. My practice today primarily focuses on election integrity, civil rights, constitutional law, public access to government records, and matters involving official misconduct. I have litigated election and civil rights matters in federal courts across multiple circuits and have testified before the U.S. House and Senate Judiciary Committees, as well as other congressional committees.

Previously, I served as a Trial Attorney in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, where my responsibilities included enforcing all provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 ("VRA"), NVRA, and the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986 ("UOCAVA"), codified at 52 U.S.C. §§ 20301 to 20311, as amended by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act of 2009 ("MOVE Act"), Pub. L. No. 111-84, Subtitle H, §§ 575–589, 123 Stat. 2190, 2318–2335.

During my tenure at the Department, I represented the United States in numerous voting rights investigations, litigation, and settlements across dozens of jurisdictions. I was, at times, the primary attorney assigned to monitor Section 5 compliance in some covered jurisdictions. I received commendations and awards from both Republican and Democratic administrations during my service at the Department.

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[3] In particular, my colleagues Robert Popper and Eric Lee work on all of Judicial Watch's election integrity projects.

Some of my work at the Department included a 2008 case against Waller County, Texas, which addressed the county handling of voter registration applications from students at Prairie View A & M University, a historically Black university.[4] In 2011, I was part of the trial team representing the United States in the Section 5 litigation initiated by Texas concerning its 2010 redistricting.[5] In 2012, I was a member of the Department of Justice team that brought the first UOCAVA enforcement action after the 2009 MOVE Act amendments.[6]

I formerly served as a member of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's Board of Advisors. I am licensed to practice law in both Mississippi and Louisiana.

Judicial Watch, Inc.

Judicial Watch is the nation's largest conservative public interest law organization. Its mission is to promote transparency and restore accountability in government, politics, and the rule of law. Since 1994, Judicial Watch has become the largest, most successful Freedom of Information Act litigation shop, exposing corruption through public records disclosures. Consistent with our primary mission, we pursue litigation that ensures honesty and integrity in our elections.

Judicial Watch has devoted substantial resources to protecting the integrity of America's electoral processes through the enforcement of federal and state election laws, with particular emphasis on the NVRA. The NVRA requires states to maintain accurate and current voter registration lists and to remove registrations of individuals who are no longer eligible to vote, including those who have died or changed residence. When Judicial Watch identifies jurisdictions that fail to comply with these statutory obligations, it conducts independent analyses of voter registration data, submits formal inquiries and legal notices, and, where necessary, initiates litigation to compel

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[4] *U.S. v. Waller County, et al.*, 4:08-cv-03022 (S.D. Tex. Oct. 17, 2008).
[5] *Texas v. U.S.*, 887 F. Supp. 2d 133 (D.D.C. 2012), *vacated*, 570 U.S. 928 (2013).
[6] *U.S. v. Alabama*, No. 2:12-cv-00179 (M.D. Ala. 2012).

compliance. These efforts are aimed at ensuring that voter rolls accurately reflect eligible voters and that election officials carry out their federal list maintenance duties—functions that are essential to transparent and trustworthy elections.

No public or private organization has done more to force states to clean up inaccurate voter registration lists than Judicial Watch.

I. There Is Broad Public Support for Election Integrity.

A recent national survey found that 76% of respondents support requiring that all ballots must be received by election officials on or before Election Day.[7] Election-Day ballot receipt is one of the most popular election integrity requirements, second only to voter ID, which enjoys 80-plus percent public support.[8] Similarly, in national polling a majority of Americans express support for requiring proof of citizenship, reflecting widespread concern about election integrity.[9] The American people believe there are serious risk to our electoral system. For example, one study from last year showed that 64% of likely voters are concerned that electronic voting systems may allow votes to be changed remotely through internet connections.[10]

II. State Laws Extending Ballot Receipt Deadlines Violate Federal Law.

Over the past two decades, a growing number of states have enacted laws extending ballot receipt deadlines for federal elections, permitting absentee and mail-in ballots to be received and counted days or even weeks after the federally designated Election Day. The cumulative effect of

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[7] Scott Rasmussen, *80% Favor Requiring Photo ID Before Casting a Ballot*, ScottRasmussen.com (Jan. 17, 2022), https://bit.ly/4bCnMO7. This 2022 poll showed a 6% increase from a previous poll. *See* Scott Rasmussen, *70% Want All Mail-In Ballots Received By Election Day*, ScottRasmussen.com (July 13, 2021), https://bit.ly/4rzhEuB.

[8] *Id.*

[9] Megan Brenan, *Americans Endorse Both Early Voting and Voter Verification*, Gallup (Oct. 24, 2024), https://bit.ly/4bBwjAS.

[10] Rasmussen Reports, *Election Integrity: Many Don't Trust Electronic Voting Machines* (Sept. 10, 2025), https://bit.ly/4a32mse.

these policies has been profoundly detrimental to public trust in the electoral process, undermining confidence in the integrity and finality of federal elections.

Yesterday, Judicial Watch filed a merits brief in *Watson v. Republican National Committee*, No. 24-1260, articulating the legal basis for why these state laws conflict with federal statutes. A copy of this brief is attached as Exhibit 1. In this case, Judicial Watch, together with former Solicitor General Paul Clement and his team at Clement & Murphy, PLLC, represent the Libertarian Party of Mississippi in a case consolidated with *Watson*. *Watson* raises an important national issue: do federal laws that set a single Election Day for federal offices override state laws permitting ballots to arrive after Election Day? The Supreme Court's decision in this case will have far-reaching implications for the administration of mail-in voting, the finality of election results, and public confidence in the timing and integrity of federal elections.

At bottom, the case turns on the original public meaning of "the election" as that term appears in 2 U.S.C. §§ 1 and 7 and 3 U.S.C. § 1, and whether state laws extending ballot receipt beyond Election Day are "inconsistent" with those federal enactments. *See Arizona v. Inter Tribal Council of Ariz., Inc.*, 570 U.S. 1 (2013). Since 1845, federal law fixes a single national day on which votes for federal office must be final, and state laws authorizing post-Election-Day receipt impermissibly conflict with that requirement. Congress has the absolute say on timing of federal elections, and states have no authority to extend that timing past the date set by Congress.

This legal issue has emerged as a result of recent efforts by activists and interest groups to encourage state legislatures to revise or repeal long-standing election-integrity measures. Historically, absentee voting was minimal in scope, governed by stringent regulations. In recent years, however, the significant expansion of vote-by-mail systems—particularly those permitting ballots to be received and counted after Election Day—has led to a substantial increase in absentee and

mail-in voting, along with heightened public attention regarding election integrity and finality.[11] This practice has at times created uncertainty, as election officials may not have a complete tally of votes for several days or even weeks following Election Day, which can contribute to public skepticism about electoral outcomes. Such delays pose challenges to public confidence in elections, especially in cases where candidates win by narrow margins.

Advocates of post-Election-Day ballot receipt often assert that the practice has longstanding roots in American election law; however, this assertion is not supported by historical evidence. While a few states briefly permitted late-arriving ballots following the establishment of a national Election Day in 1845, these provisions were short-lived and had negligible impact due to the historically limited use of mail-in voting.[12] In fact, the concept of post-Election-Day ballot receipt is a recent practice, originating after federal legislation enacted in response to the contested 2000 presidential election.[13] Section 302 of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 ("HAVA"), codified at 52 U.S.C. § 21082, mandated states to establish provisional voting procedures for federal elections.

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[11] Vote-by-mail ballots constituted 46% of total ballots cast in 2020, by far the primary means by which votes were cast in the United States. From 1920-30, absentee ballots were estimated to account for less than .5% of total votes. Joseph P. Harris, *Election Administration in the United States* 283-99 (Brookings Inst. 1934) available at https://bit.ly/3cdio7z. In 2000, 10% of voters nationwide voted by mail. *See* Charles Stewart III, HOW WE VOTED IN 2020: A FIRST LOOK AT THE SURVEY OF THE PERFORMANCE OF AMERICAN ELECTIONS, MIT Election Data + Science Lab, (Dec. 15, 2020), available at https://bit.ly/39WCp0H. That number doubled to 21% by 2016 before doubling yet again to 46% in 2020. *Id.* Voting by mail is now the predominant voting method over early voting and Election Day voting with 31.9% of federal ballots in 2022 were cast by mail. Election Assistance Comm'n, *Election Administration and Voting Survey 2022 Comprehensive Report* 9, 33-34 (June 2023), https://bit.ly/4aB6Rui.

[12] Harris, *supra* note 11, at 298–99 (noting that, given the "small number" of absentee votes, they did "not occasion serious frauds").

[13] Following the 2000 election, two competing election visions of electoral reform arose. Fortier & Norman J. Ornstein, Symposium, *Election Reform: The Absentee Ballot and the Secret Ballot: Challenges For Election Reform*, 36 U. Mich. J.L. Reform 483, 484 (2003). One vision sought to improve poll sites, while the other sought to discourage the use of poll sites and promote voting by mail.

HAVA prioritized Election Day receipt by specifying that provisional ballots are both cast and "received" at polling locations on Election Day, subject to subsequent verification of voter eligibility. After states rolled out their provisional ballot procedures, some advocates began utilizing the eligibility-verification period for provisional ballots as a reason to extend ballot receipt deadlines beyond Election Day—a effort that notably intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, when public health concerns were used to justify sweeping departures from traditional integrity protections.[14]

Disparate state deadlines for completing voting, however, is precisely the type of mischief Congress sought to eliminate when it enacted uniform Election-Day statutes in 1845, 1872, and 1914. *See* 3 U.S.C. § 1; 2 U.S.C. §§ 1, 7. The whole point of the Election-Day statutes is to set a single uniform day for the election. Allowing ballots to trickle in days or weeks after Election Day is antithetical to that basic goal. Indeed, a patchwork of state ballot-receipt deadlines replicates the problems Congress was trying to remedy with a single national Election Day. It is entirely implausible to conclude that Congress—when thrice exercising its preemptive power under the Elections and Electors Clauses—left the door open for states to vitiate those statutes by postponing electoral outcomes with post-election ballot-receipt deadlines. Congress certainly did not leave states the power to undo this important federal time regulation by simply declaring all mailboxes

[14] Indeed, it appears that most state post-election receipt laws were enacted after HAVA's enactment. *See, e.g.*, Cal. Elec. Code. § 3020 (2014); D.C. Code § 1-10001.05(a)(10A) (2019); 10 ILCS 5/19-8 (2005); Kan. Stat. Ann. § 25-1132 (2017); Md. Code Regs. 33.11.03.08 (2004); Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 54, § 93 (2021); Miss. Code. Ann. § 23-15-637 (2020); Nev. Rev. Stat. § 293.269921 (2021); N.J. Stat. Ann. § 19:63- 22 (2018); N.Y. Elec. Law § 8-412 (1994); Or. Rev. Stat. § 253.070(3) (2021); Tex. Elec. Code Ann. § 86.007 (1997); Utah Code Ann. § 20A-3a-204 (2020); Va. Code Ann. § 24.2-709(B) (2010); W. Va. Code §§ 3-3-5(g)(2), 3-5-17(1993); Ala. Code § 17-11-18(b) (2014); Ark. Code. Ann. § 7-5411(a)(1)(A) (2001); Ind. Code § 3-12-1-17(b) (2006); Fla. Stat. § 101.6952(5) (2013); Ga. Code Ann. § 21-2-386(a)(1)(G) (2005); Mich. Comp. Laws § 168.759a (2012); Mo. Rev. Stat. § 115.920(1) (2013); 25 Pa. Cons. Stat. § 3511(a) (2012); R.I. Gen Laws § 17-20-16 (2019); and S.C. Code Ann. §§ 7-15-700(a), 7-17-10 (2015).

to be ballot boxes. Allowing ballots to be received by election officials well after the polls closed on Election Day would have struck the Congresses that passed those statutes and the public that first read them as unthinkable.

As members of Congress explained at the time, the absence of a uniform Election Day invited fraud—and, just as importantly, the appearance of fraud. *See* Br. of Amici Curiae Prof. Michael T. Morley et al. in Support of Neither Party at 9–17, *Watson v. Republican Nat'l Comm.*, No. 24-1260 (U.S. filed Jan. 9, 2026) (collecting historical sources). Congress established and reinforced a single national Election Day "to combat election fraud by preventing double voting, reduce burdens on voters, and prevent results from states with early elections from influencing voters in other jurisdictions." Michael T. Morley, *Postponing Federal Elections Due to Election Emergencies*, 77 Wash. & Lee L. Rev. Online 179, 215 (2020).

The legislative history shows that Congress's objective extended beyond preventing actual fraud to preserving public confidence in election outcomes. S*ee, e.g.*, Cong. Globe, 28th Cong., 1st Sess. 728 (June 14, 1844) (statement of Sen. Atherton). Congress acted "to remedy more than one evil arising from the election of members of Congress occurring at different times in the different States." *Foster v. Love*, 522 U.S. 67, 73 (1997) (quoting *Ex parte Yarbrough*, 110 U.S. 651, 661 (1884)). The question now before the Court is whether states may undo those protections by extending ballot receipt beyond Election Day itself.

III. Overblown Fears About Ballot Access Do Not Justify Subordinating Election Integrity.

Under the guise of ballot access, long-established safeguards essential to accurate and lawful elections—including voter-eligibility verification, systematic voter-list maintenance, and basic security and confirmation procedures—have been diluted, suspended, or actively discouraged. Measures that for generations commanded bipartisan support and formed the backbone of election

administration have been recast as suspect or illegitimate, despite their clear historical and statutory grounding as well as proven role in preventing fraud and administrative error. In some instances, even the most basic integrity protections have been dismissed as relics of voter suppression—derided as "Jim Crow 2.0"—rather than recognized for what they are: neutral, lawful mechanisms designed to ensure that elections are conducted fairly, consistently, and in accordance with the law. Public confidence in elections will continue to erode in those states that subordinate election integrity to specious concerns about ballot access.

The emphasis on ballot access is not inherently problematic. However, when the emphasis predominates all other considerations, especially election integrity, it inflicts serious and measurable damage to public confidence in federal elections. The systematic dismantling of longstanding election-integrity safeguards has undermined trust in both state and federal elections. What began as isolated state-level policy choices has now become a national problem.

The absence of traditional election integrity safeguards in these jurisdictions fuels a growing view that federal elections there are not conducted on a level playing field, thereby undermining public confidence in the fairness and integrity of the electoral process. Elections conducted in the Jim Crow South were widely viewed as illegitimate due to the systematic disenfranchisement of eligible Black voters. Today, insecure election in places that refuse to enact or enforce election integrity safeguards (e.g., Oregon, California, and Illinois) are similarly perceived has lacking legitimacy.

Recent experience illustrates the point. In the 2024 election cycle, two GOP congressional incumbents lost reelection after initially leading on election night, only to be overtaken days later

by late-arriving vote-by-mail ballots. [15] Outcomes such as these exacerbate public doubt about the fairness, uniformity, and finality of federal elections.

This evolution has altered not only how elections are conducted, but how they are perceived. When historical election integrity safeguards that once commanded bipartisan acceptance are removed for select elections, the predictable result is growing skepticism about whether national elections are being administered lawfully, consistently, and in good faith. The erosion of confidence now evident across the electorate is not the product of ballot access itself, but of a policy environment that treats election-integrity protections as optional rather than essential.

In the decades following the civil rights era, election policies were focused on ending racial discrimination and making sure everyone had equal access to the ballot. Thanks to constitutional amendments, federal laws, and years of enforcement, those issues have been directly addressed. Today, continuing to describe modern election integrity measures as forms of voter suppression misses the reality of current challenges. But these safeguards do not block voter access – they prevent fraud and limit mistakes. Mislabeling safeguards as "suppressive" repeats the mistakes of the past and threatens to weaken public trust in our elections.

Registration and Turnout Data Show That Minority Voters Have Equal Access.[16]

Virtually all election policy discussion over the last seventy-five years has focused on minority ballot access and equal opportunity. To objectively assess whether racial minorities have an equal opportunity to participate in the electoral process, it is essential to examine racial registration

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[15] Hanna Kang, *Election 2024 Results: Derek Tran now 613 votes ahead of Rep. Michelle Steel*, OC REGISTER (Nov. 27, 2024), https://bit.ly/42KaNFG; and Jamie Joseph, *RNC rails against California's late mail-in ballot counting amid national litigation: It is absurd*, FOX NEWS (Nov. 27, 2024), https://fxn.ws/435dKAz .

[16] All registration and turnout data regarding the 2020 election is from an April 2021 report from the Census Bureau. *See* Dept. of Commerce, Census Bureau, Reported Voting and Registration, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States (Nov. 2020)(Table 4b) https://bit.ly/4aBsPx8.

and turnout data. Before the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, registration data showed just how much the system was failing minorities. At that time, only 19.4 percent of black citizens of voting age were registered to vote in Alabama, only 31.8 percent in Louisiana, and only 6.4 percent in Mississippi. *See Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529, 545-46 (2013). These figures reflected a roughly 50 percent or greater disparity between the registration rates of black and white voters. *Id.*

Recent figures demonstrate that racial disparities in voting have been significantly reduced and, in many instances, eliminated. Compared to the period when Congress enacted the Voting Rights Act of 1965, opportunities for participation are now exponentially greater.

Registration. Current data demonstrates that Black voter registration has not only fully recovered but, in some cases, now surpasses White registration rates. Specifically, the data indicates that registration disparities in Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi—all states previously subject (in whole or in part) to Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act—are now below the national average. Notably, Black registration in Mississippi is 4.3% *higher* than White registration. Furthermore, registration disparities in these former Section 5 states are lower than those observed in California, New York, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Delaware, and Virginia. In fact, the four largest registration disparities, *i.e.*, where White registration most exceeds Black registration, are found in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Oregon, and Colorado—all states carried by President Biden in 2020.

Turnout. The 2020 election saw increased voter turnout across all racial groups.[17] Notably, voter turnout disparities in Mississippi, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and Texas were all

[17] *Despite Pandemic Challenges, 2020 Election Had Largest Increase in Voting Between Presidential Elections on Record*, Dept. of Commerce, Census Bureau (Apr. 29, 2021) https://bit.ly/4kjdeWg.

below the national average. In contrast, the turnout disparities observed in Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Oregon, Colorado, New Jersey, and New York exceeded those in these former Section 5 states. Furthermore, turnout among Black voters in Mississippi surpassed that of White voters.

There exists a substantial disconnect between empirical data and prevailing media narratives. Regardless of one's perspective regarding claims of "rampant voter suppression," the facts are incontrovertible: voter registration rates and turnout in 2020 far surpassed those recorded in 1965. When Black citizens now register and participate at higher rates in states such as Mississippi, it is not credible to assert that Jim Crow–style voter suppression persists today. [18]

The fact is that minority participation during the 2020 election was exponentially higher nationwide than it was during actual Jim Crow in 1965. For example, in Tennessee, Black registration and turnout in 2020 exceeded that for Whites. Hardly Jim Crow. The same is true just downriver in Mississippi. Previously, Jim Crow Mississippi saw an astonishingly low 6.4% registration rate for blacks.

Over the past fifteen years, ballot access has markedly expanded, even as persistent claims of voter suppression have circulated. Minority voter registration and turnout have risen, and racial disparities in participation have narrowed considerably. The data makes it clear: current allegations of widespread voter suppression do not align with the actual trends in ballot access. Notably, these positive advancements have taken place *even as* many states enacted Voter ID laws that critics labeled as suppressive. In reality, like many other overblown fears about ballot access, concerns over the impact of Voter ID requirements have proven unfounded, as evidenced by the

[18] Editorial, *'Jim Eagle' and Georgia's Voting Law: Biden Compares State Voting Bills to Jim Crow, Never Mind the Facts*, WALL STREET JOURNAL (March 26, 2021), https://bit.ly/4tGbif5.

overwhelming public support for these policies—recent polling shows that approximately 80% of Americans now favor Voter ID measures.

IV. Inaccurate Voter Rolls Compound Public Distrust Elections

As early as 1800, Massachusetts implemented voter registration requirements specifically to prevent fraud and ineligible voting, reflecting a widely shared understanding that accurate voter rolls are essential to election integrity.[19] Historical evidence, as detailed below, makes it abundantly clear that the risks of election fraud and systemic irregularities are heightened when voter eligibility is not verified, registration lists are outdated or inaccurate, and election officials fail to implement and enforce clear legal safeguards. Congress enacted the NVRA, in part, to prevent a return to such conditions, imposing affirmative duties on states to maintain accurate voter rolls through ongoing and effective list maintenance. However, despite these federal mandates, many states today are falling short of compliance, allowing millions of obsolete and ineligible registrations to persist year after year. By neglecting their list-maintenance obligations, states are not merely committing technical violations of federal law—they are recreating vulnerabilities that have historically enabled fraud, distorted electoral outcomes, and diminished public trust in our democratic process. This persistent pattern of noncompliance highlights the urgent need for robust and consistently enforced list-maintenance standards to protect the integrity and credibility of our modern elections. Ultimately, inadequate list-maintenance practices fuel public perceptions that our nation's electoral system is not operating as it should.

These current shortcomings are not unprecedented. The responsibility to maintain accurate voter lists has deep roots in American election law and has long been recognized as a vital safeguard against illegal voting and election fraud. The historical record—further explored in the

[19] Harris, *supra* note 11, at 18.

following section—demonstrates that prioritizing election integrity is essential and that neglecting or manipulating registration systems exposes elections to fraud, coercion, and widespread public distrust. The ongoing failure of many states to comply with the NVRA thus echoes longstanding historical challenges that election law has repeatedly sought to address and remedy.

5.8 Million Removals—and Counting

In April 2025, Judicial Watch's President Tom Fitton announced that Judicial Watch's NVRA enforcement efforts over the years had resulted in the removal of more than five million ineligible registrations from voter rolls in nearly a dozen states and local jurisdictions.[20] These removals occurred as a result of court orders, settlement agreements, and corrective actions taken by election officials following Judicial Watch litigation or formal legal demands. The affected registrations included individuals who were deceased, had relocated, or were otherwise ineligible under the NVRA. While surpassing the five-million-removal mark represents a significant milestone in restoring compliance with federal election law, it also underscores a broader reality: millions of outdated and ineligible registrations remain on voter rolls nationwide. Judicial Watch continues to pursue active litigation to enforce NVRA list-maintenance requirements in multiple states, including Oregon, California, and Illinois.

Recent developments illustrate both the scope of the problem and the need for enforcement. In January 2026, Oregon election officials announced plans to address approximately 800,000 inactive voter registrations—nearly one-fifth of the State's entire voter roll—after acknowledging that these registrations had accumulated over many years without being properly processed.[21] This

[20] *New Numbers Show Over Five Million Names Cleaned from Voter Rolls Nationwide*, Judicial Watch (April. 3, 2025), https://bit.ly/3Mk9KpV (discussing removals in PA, CA, NC, OH, KY, and NY).

[21] *Oregon Election System Faces Scrutiny As State Moves to Address 800,000 Inactive Voters: 'Astounding'*, Judicial Watch (Jan. 14, 2026), https://bit.ly/4qq2Dub.

announcement followed Judicial Watch's, challenging Oregon's longstanding failure to conduct mandatory list maintenance. The magnitude of Oregon's inactive voter backlog reflects the consequences of prolonged delay and inadequate enforcement of federal election law.[22] Although state officials have characterized the initiative as a corrective step intended to improve accuracy and restore public confidence, the need to remove hundreds of thousands of long-inactive registrations at once highlights precisely the type of systemic noncompliance that Judicial Watch's election-integrity work seeks to identify and remedy. Oregon's announcement highlights the severity of the issue and the value of enforcing current laws, especially where states will not comply on their own.

The NVRA's Modest List-Maintenance Requirements

As the NVRA itself makes clear in its "Findings and Purposes," the statute was enacted to achieve two distinct objectives. First, it sought to "increase the number of eligible citizens who register to vote," thereby enhancing participation in elections for federal office. Second, it aimed to "protect the integrity of the electoral process" by ensuring that accurate and current voter registration rolls are maintained.[23]

The first objective—increasing the number of eligible registrants—was intended to be achieved primarily by expanding the number of state offices at which citizens are offered the opportunity to register to vote. The most significant provision advancing this goal requires that every application for a state driver's license also serve as a voter registration application, a feature that has given the NVRA its familiar designation as the "Motor Voter" law.[24] There is substantial evidence that this first objective has largely been realized. For example, during the twenty-year period

[22] *Id.*
[23] 52 U.S.C. § 20501(b).
[24] 52 U.S.C. § 20504(a).

from 1992—the year before the NVRA's enactment—through 2012, the national voter registration rate increased by more than 11 percent. [25]

The second objective—protecting electoral integrity by ensuring accurate and current voter rolls—was to be accomplished through the NVRA's requirement that states "conduct a general program that makes a reasonable effort to remove the names of ineligible voters" from the rolls when they have died or moved.[26] That objective has not been met. Several years ago, a widely cited study brought this failure forcefully to national attention, concluding that "24 million—one of every eight—voter registrations in the United States are no longer valid or are significantly inaccurate," that "1.8 million deceased individuals are listed as voters," and that "2.75 million people have registrations in more than one state."[27] Based on Judicial Watch's more recent research, there is every reason to believe that these problems have worsened.

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission ("EAC") has publicly released the responses provided by states in its most recent election administration survey. By law, the Commission must submit a report to Congress every two years assessing the impact of the NVRA on the administration of federal elections during the preceding two-year period, and states are required to provide the requested information.[28] That data, giving rise to the lawsuits discussed in the following section, confirms that many states are failing to carry out minimal list maintenance.

States Chronically Fail to Maintain Accurate Registration Lists

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[25] Royce Crocker, *The National Voter Registration Act of 1993: History, Implementation, and Effects*, Appendix A, Cong. Res. Serv. (Sept. 18, 2013), https://bit.ly/4r5MefK.

[26] 52 U.S.C. § 20507(a)(4).

[27] *Inaccurate, Costly, and Inefficient: Evidence That America's Voter Registration System Needs an Upgrade*, Pew Res. Ctr. On The States (Feb. 14, 2012), https://bit.ly/3OuRJ92.

[28] 52 U.S.C. § 20508(a)(3) and 11 C.F.R. § 9428.7.

Judicial Watch's analysis consistently demonstrates a pervasive failure by states to fulfill the voter list-maintenance obligations imposed by the NVRA. Despite the NVRA's clear and longstanding requirements, states across the country continue to neglect their statutory duty to maintain accurate and current voter registration lists. Section 8 of the NVRA requires states to conduct a "general program" that makes a reasonable effort to remove ineligible voters—particularly those who have moved or died—and to maintain records demonstrating compliance. Yet recent litigation brought by Judicial Watch in Oregon, California, and Illinois shows that these failures are not isolated or technical in nature. Instead, they reflect systemic breakdowns in list-maintenance practices, inadequate oversight by chief state election officials, and persistent refusals to provide legally required public records.

Judicial Watch's lawsuit against Oregon alleges a statewide failure to conduct a legally required voter list-maintenance program under Section 8 of the NVRA.[29] Data Oregon itself reported to the EAC shows that 19 Oregon counties removed zero voter registrations for failure to respond to address-confirmation notices and failure to vote in two consecutive federal elections during the most recent reporting period.[30] (¶ 26). Ten additional counties removed 11 or fewer registrations during that same period, despite collectively maintaining more than 2.4 million registered voters. (¶ 27). These removal numbers are irreconcilable with Census Bureau data showing significant residential mobility within and out of Oregon. (¶¶ 30-32). Oregon's voter rolls also reflect extraordinarily high overall registration rates, with 35 of Oregon's 36 counties exceeding 100% registration when compared to citizen voting-age population estimates. (¶¶ 39–41). Inactive

[29] *Judicial Watch Sues Oregon to Force Clean Up of Voter Rolls—Lawsuit Alleges Oregon Has One of Worst Voting Lists in the Nation*, Judicial Watch, Inc. (Oct. 23, 2024), https://bit.ly/4r8LmHc.

[30] *See* Exhibit 2 - Complaint, *Judicial Watch, et al. v. Oregon, et al.*, No. 6:24-cv-01783 (D. Or. Oct. 23, 2024).

registrations comprise roughly 20% of Oregon's statewide voter rolls—the highest known inactive rate of any state in the nation. (¶¶ 47–51). Hundreds of thousands of Oregon registrations have remained inactive for three or more federal election cycles without being removed, in direct violation of mandatory NVRA procedures. (¶¶ 54–60). Taken together, these facts demonstrate a statewide breakdown in list maintenance and a failure by Oregon's chief election official to coordinate compliance with federal law. (¶¶ 35–36, 61–62).

The California lawsuit alleges similarly systemic NVRA violations, supported by the State's own admissions and reported data.[31] California reported to the EAC that 27 counties removed five or fewer voter registrations under the NVRA's mandatory address-change removal process over a two-year period.[32] (¶¶ 27–31). An additional 19 counties reported that removal data was simply "not available," a failure that itself violates federal reporting requirements. (¶¶ 27–31). Census Bureau data shows substantial population movement within and out of California, making these removal figures implausible on their face. (¶¶ 25–26). Judicial Watch formally inquired about these discrepancies and requested NVRA-mandated records, including lists of voters who were sent confirmation notices. (¶¶ 40–46). California's Secretary of State response revealed a wholesale failure to maintain records expressly required by Section 8(i) of the NVRA and to conduct a general list-maintenance program at all. (¶¶ 47–77). Judicial Watch has confirmed that at least 21 counties collectively removed only 11 voters statewide under the NVRA's mandatory removal provisions, despite maintaining nearly six million registrations. (¶¶ 50–54, 57). These

[31] *Judicial Watch Sues California to Force Clean-Up of Voting Rolls*, Judicial Watch, Inc. (May 7, 2024), https://bit.ly/4aE4neA.

[32] *See* Exhibit 3 - Complaint in *Judicial Watch Inc. and the Libertarian Party of CA v. Shirley Weber, et al.*, No. 2:24-cv-03750 (C.D. Ca. May 6, 2024).

facts establish both a failure to maintain accurate voter rolls and a failure to provide public access to records that federal law requires states to preserve and disclose.

Judicial Watch's Illinois litigation presents one of the clearest examples of statewide NVRA noncompliance documented to date.[33] Illinois reported to the EAC that 11 counties removed zero voters and 12 additional counties removed 15 or fewer voters under the NVRA's mandatory address-change procedures during the relevant reporting period.[34] (¶¶ 28–29). Those 23 counties collectively maintained nearly one million registered voters but removed only 100 registrations over two years. (¶¶ 30–31). Illinois further admitted that 34 jurisdictions failed to report any removal data at all, and many also failed to report death removals, confirmation notices, or inactive-voter statistics. (¶¶ 38–47). In total, 60% of Illinois jurisdictions either reported negligible removals or failed to report required data altogether, affecting approximately two-thirds of all registered voters in the State. (¶¶ 49–50). When Judicial Watch requested NVRA-mandated records, Illinois election officials admitted that the State lacked access to local list-maintenance data and did not possess records that federal law requires the State itself to maintain. (¶¶ 56–59). These admissions establish that Illinois cannot—and does not—coordinate statewide compliance with the NVRA, as federal law requires. (¶¶ 60–61). The Illinois case thus illustrates not merely poor execution, but a structural abdication of federal list-maintenance responsibilities by the State's chief election authority.

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[33] *Judicial Watch Sues Illinois to Force Clean-Up of Voting Rolls*, Judicial Watch, Inc., (March 6, 2024), https://bit.ly/4kyZzur.

[34] *See* Exhibit 4 - Complaint, *Judicial Watch Inc. et al. v. Illinois State Board of Elections et al.*, No. 1:24-cv-01867 (N. D. Ill. March 5, 2024).

III. History Shows That Election Integrity Is Critical For Public Confidence In Its Government.

"Nothing will undermine the morale of the voting public so quickly as a suspicion that the elections are not honestly conducted." [35]

Long before today's debates on election integrity, leading experts systematically documented the consequences of inadequate or poorly enforced election integrity laws. National surveys and research illustrated the struggle between advocates for robust election safeguards and those who exploited weak or lax enforcement. Many of the election integrity measures challenged today were enacted in direct response to serious, recurring failures identified in these early studies. Election integrity is not only essential for maintaining public confidence in election outcomes, but also for ensuring that the laws enacted by subsequent governments that form following elections are viewed as legitimate.

Two foundational works addressing election integrity are *Election Administration in the United States* and the nineteenth-century treatise *A Treatise on the American Law of Elections*. Although different in method, both relied heavily on primary sources—including official election records, contested-election proceedings, judicial decisions, and direct observation of election administration across numerous jurisdictions. Together, they documented persistent breakdowns in election administration and demonstrated that elections lose legitimacy when eligibility rules are weakly enforced, voter rolls are inaccurate, and statutory safeguards are treated as optional rather than mandatory. The integrity protections that later became embedded in American election law were adopted precisely to correct the failures recorded in these books and to ensure elections were conducted in an orderly, verifiable, and publicly credible manner. Any proposal to weaken or

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[35] Harris, *supra* note 11, at 261.

discard those safeguards—without first grappling with the historical reasons for their adoption and the continued necessity of their enforcement—ignores hard-earned lessons about how election systems maintain legitimacy and public trust.

Election Administration in the United States was a comprehensive, empirical study commissioned and published by the Brookings Institution during the Progressive Era, when widespread concerns about election corruption and administrative failures prompted calls for reform. Joseph P. Harris was the principal author, drawing on nationwide field investigations and official records to document how elections were actually conducted and to inform the development of durable election-integrity safeguards. Harris's research showed that election fraud emerged, among other places, where voter lists were inaccurate, election procedures were poorly enforced, and administrative oversight was lax. Several of his chapters provide the essential context for understanding why modern election systems rely on layered integrity safeguards.[36] Harris's work demonstrated that many of the procedures now taken for granted, including accurate voter registration lists, voter ID, ballot security, and transparent administration, were adopted in direct response to recurring abuses observed when elections were loosely regulated or poorly enforced. Read together, these chapters make clear that election-integrity laws did not arise from abstract theory or partisan preference, but from hard experience with fraud, coercion, and administrative failure—and from the recognition that public confidence in elections depends on rigorous, enforceable rules.

Discussing election frauds, Harris outlined numerous election safeguards and practices that were adopted in the United States's elections that promoted election integrity and public confidence in elections. His work identified the principal types of fraud and concrete historical

[36] *Id.* at 150-199 (Chapter V – Ballots); 200-46 (Chapter VI - Conduct of Elections); 247-82 (Chapter VII – Voting Machines); 283-315 (Chapter VIII – Absentee Voting; Mail Voting; The Canvass; Recounts); and 315-82 (Chapter IX- Election Frauds)

examples observed in American elections.[37] Harris's account is significant not because it describes a bygone era, but because it documents a persistent reality: election fraud historically flourished where administrative safeguards were weak, voter registration lists were inaccurate or obsolete, and election officials failed to enforce the law. His analysis underscores that confidence in elections depends not on assurances or rhetoric, but on rigorous compliance with statutory protections—including accurate voter registration lists, secure ballot procedures, and transparent election administration.

Harris's research illustrates the increasing significance of voter identification at polling locations, particularly after urban areas adopted voting machines, resulting in larger polling sites. As these sites expanded, poll workers and voters could no longer depend on personal familiarity, since participants often originated from various neighborhoods.[38] Today, consolidated poll sites are substantially larger than those from Harris's era, underscoring the rationale for implementing measures such as Voter ID. Modern poll workers are unable to rely solely on neighborhood recognition or signature verification; thus, instituting Voter ID requirements serves to maintain an appropriate balance between electoral integrity and ballot access—an equilibrium that has historically been essential for sustaining public trust.

Harris identified registration fraud as a foundational vulnerability in election systems, describing practices such as the registration of fictitious voters, the retention of deceased or relocated individuals on voter rolls, and the registration of non-residents. He emphasized that inaccurate registration lists served as the gateway through which many other forms of fraud became possible.[39] Closely related was the practice known as "repeating," in which the same individual voted

[37] *Id.* at 315-82.
[38] *Id.* at 221.
[39] *Id.* at 370-72.

multiple times in a single election by exploiting disorganized poll books or lax identification procedures—particularly in large urban jurisdictions dominated by political machines.[40]

Harris further documented ballot-box stuffing, in which fraudulent ballots were inserted either before polls opened or during the counting process, often with the cooperation or acquiescence of partisan election officials.[41] He also described the use of "chain ballots," a systematic scheme in which pre-marked ballots were circulated among voters throughout Election Day, undermining ballot secrecy and allowing fraud to be repeated on a large scale.[42]

Additional abuses identified by Harris included fraudulent assistance to voters, particularly illiterate or vulnerable voters, where election workers effectively directed or altered voter choices under the guise of lawful assistance.[43] He also documented intimidation and violence, including threats and coercive tactics designed to suppress turnout or influence voting behavior in opposition strongholds.[44]

Finally, Harris detailed post-voting frauds, including the alteration or substitution of ballots, false tabulation, and false election returns. He cited recounts in major cities such as Chicago and Philadelphia that revealed discrepancies numbering in the thousands of votes—evidence of deliberate manipulation rather than mere clerical error.[45] Harris concluded that these practices were enabled by weak controls during the counting and canvassing stages of elections and by the absence of meaningful accountability mechanisms.[46]

Harris's findings remain instructive today. They demonstrate that public confidence in elections depends on the consistent enforcement of laws designed to prevent fraud before it

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[40] *Id.*
[41] *Id.* at 372-373.
[42] *Id.* at 373.
[43] *Id.* at 373.
[44] *Id.* at 373-74.
[45] *Id.* at 373-75.
[46] *Id.* at 375-82.

occurs—particularly those governing voter registration accuracy, ballot security, and transparent election administration. Where those safeguards are neglected, history shows that fraud, error, and public distrust predictably follow.[47]

A Treatise on the American Law of Elections, first published in 1875 by George Washington McCrary—a former Member of Congress, Chairman of the House Committee on Elections, and subsequently a federal judge—was widely regarded as the preeminent nineteenth-century legal treatise on U.S. election law.[48] McCrary relied on hundreds of contested-election cases, legislative histories, judicial decisions, and official election records to compile the work, anchoring his analysis within the practical procedures and disputes that defined electoral practices during the post-Civil War and Reconstruction eras. The treatise underwent several editions, underscoring its widespread acceptance among courts, legislators, and legal practitioners as an authoritative resource on election law, particularly regarding statutory and case-law precedents relevant to contested elections and electoral integrity.

McCrary's work, together with Harris's, demonstrate the near-constant need for enhanced election integrity.[49] Election misconduct, and the perception of the same, is a real and recurring threat to democratic governance. Their work underscores a central lesson that remains relevant today: when laws governing voter eligibility, registration accuracy, and election administration are not rigorously enforced, fraud, abuse, and public distrust predictably follow.

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[47] *Id.*

[48] George W. McCrary, *A Treatise on the American Law of Elections* (4th ed. 1897).

[49] Further historical instances of election administration issues are documented in Richard Franklin Bensel's *The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (2004).

Long-Recognized Dangers Posed By Mail Voting Still Apply Today

Prior to the adoption of the Australian ballot, American elections were routinely marked by bribery, intimidation, violence, and overt corruption, largely because voting was public and party-controlled ballots allowed third parties to observe and verify how individuals voted.[50] Money was openly used to "carry elections," that voters frequently demanded payment for their ballots, and that systematic vote-buying had become a recognized feature of election machinery in both urban and rural areas. Elections were further characterized by intimidation and coercion, including employers monitoring workers at polling places, threatening job loss for disfavored votes, and physically escorting or "marching" voters to the polls under supervision.[51] Assaults, ballot snatching, substitution of ballots, and violent disruption of polling places were common, with voters sometimes having ballots forcibly replaced or being deterred from voting altogether through fear and disorder.[52]

The adoption of the Australian ballot—by providing a secret, government-supplied ballot marked in private—was intended specifically to eliminate these abuses by preventing verification of purchased or coerced votes.[53] Reformers argued, and experience confirmed, that bribery declined sharply because a purchaser could no longer know whether a bought vote had actually been delivered, making vote-buying economically irrational.[54] One consequence of this innovation was a decline in voter turnout, as voters who had previously participated only because they were bribed, coerced, or economically dependent ceased voting once those inducements were removed.[55] Although critics cited this reduced turnout as evidence of voter suppression, reformers viewed it

[50] Eldon Cobb Evans, *A History of the Australian Ballot System in the United States* at 24–25 (1917) available at https://bit.ly/3MvT0My https://bit.ly/3MvT0My.
[51] *Id.* at 26-27.
[52] *Id.* at 31-32.
[53] *Id.* at 45-46.
[54] *Id.* at 45-47.
[55] *Id.* at 25-27.

instead as proof that the ballot had transformed voting from a commercial transaction into a civic act, eliminating corrupt participation while preserving genuine electoral choice.[56]

Harris's later survey offered confirmation for advocates of the Australian ballot. In his 1934 report, he described improvements to electoral integrity that resulted from the adoption of the Australian ballot commencing in 1888:

> Since 1900 the general tone of election administration has greatly improved throughout the country, and frauds, formerly so widespread, have tended to disappear in all but a few communities. This improvement has been brought about by stricter registration laws, more stringent election laws, the requirement of the signature at the polls, the Australian ballot, which has practically put a stop to bribery, and, in recent years, by the enfranchisement of women and the passing of the open saloon. Not many years ago it was taken for granted that there would be a great deal of drunkenness, disorder, violence, bribery, and other malpractices at the polls. Today the polling place is quiet and orderly. One of the leading arguments used against woman suffrage was that no woman of refinement or culture would care to venture near the polls on the day of election, for "it was not a fit place for women." Happily this has practically passed. Election frauds have not entirely disappeared, and intimidation and violence are sometimes present at the polls, but these conditions obtain only in a few politically backward communities.

Harris, *supra* note 11, at 19-20.

This history is increasingly relevant today, as the expansion of large-scale vote-by-mail systems and ballot-harvesting practices has shifted voting back into unsupervised environments. In these settings, ballots are completed outside the privacy and oversight provided by polling places and poll watchers, often in the presence of third parties. Under such circumstances, the risks of coercion, intimidation, and undue influence—by political operatives, caregivers, activists, or ballot collectors who may observe, pressure, or control how a ballot is marked and returned—have grown substantially. This reintroduces many of the vulnerabilities that the Australian ballot system was specifically designed to eliminate.

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[56] *Id.* at 48.

Vote-by-mail is neither a new nor inherently beneficial idea. Progressives have advocated for it at various times over the past one hundred years. Its recent adoption by several states is concerning because any improvement in voter turnout appears marginal, while the damage to public confidence in electoral results are significant. Whatever modest gains in turnout may occur are clearly outweighed by the extent to which widespread vote-by-mail undermines public trust and confidence in the electoral process as a whole.

Again, Harris thoroughly described in 1934 the risks from mail voting:

> **Mail Voting**. Related somewhat to absent voting is the proposal to permit all voters to cast their ballots at home and to mail them to the election authorities. This is usually called "mail" or "home voting." It has been proposed to the Wisconsin legislature for several years, receiving considerable support, including that of two members of the Milwaukee board of elections. The proposal in more detail is that the election office should mail to every voter an official ballot and an envelope in which to return it; that the voter should mark the ballot at his home and return it to the election office through the mail, signing a statement on a perforated stub of the envelope to the effect that the ballot had been marked secretly, and without coercion, intimidation, or corrupt influence. The election office would file these ballots as they are received, sorting them by precincts or other divisions. On the day of the election the envelopes would be examined and the signatures compared with those on the registration record. If the results of this examination were satisfactory, the signature stub would be removed and filed as a poll list, and the ballot deposited in the ballot box, thus losing its identity. After all the ballots had been passed upon in this way, the count would be conducted in the usual manner, but by the counting clerks employed by the election office.
>
> The arguments for home voting are that it would greatly increase the vote cast, make possible a more careful consideration of the ballot by the voter, perhaps in consultation with other members of his family, reduce the cost, avoid the loss of time on the part of the voters, and avoid the necessity for making election day a legal holiday. The principal argument against mail voting is that bribery and intimidation would be practiced upon a large scale, especially in cities, that the secrecy of the ballot would be destroyed, and that the history of elections in this country and elsewhere shows clearly the need for a secret ballot, marked and cast at a public polling place.
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> Mail voting resembles the method of voting used in this country prior to the adoption of the Australian ballot. Although the voter was required to come to the polls to deposit his ballot, he brought it with him already marked. Under that system bribery, intimidation, corruption, and party machine domination were rampant. If

the safeguards of secrecy were removed at this time, there is nothing to indicate that we might not have a return to such a system. While it is probably true that home voting would work out quite satisfactorily in some communities, there would be grave danger of a return to the former vicious practices in the poorer districts of our large cities particularly the machine controlled wards. Bribery is feasible only when the briber is sure of getting the votes for which he has paid. It would be entirely reasonable to expect a return of bribery if a scheme of mail voting were adopted. The amount of intimidation now exercised by the precinct captain in many sections of large cities is very great; with mail voting it would be enormously increased. The overbearing and dominant precinct captain would insist upon seeing how each voter under obligation to him had marked his ballot, and the voter would, have no protection against such tactics.

An event occurred several years ago in the election of state;s attorney in Chicago, which illustrates convincingly the need of a secret ballot. Robert T. Crowe was a candidate for re-election. A secret poll of the bar association indicated a heavy majority for his opponent, John A. Swanson. Just before the election, Crowe published a list of attorneys who had signed a statement endorsing his candidacy. The list contained the names of over two thousand Chicago attorneys, many of whom were known to their friends to be opposed to Crowe. The explanation is obvious. These attorneys did not dare refuse to sign the endorsement when they were asked to do so by Crowe workers for fear of reprisals. If attorneys can be intimidated in this way, it is readily apparent that the voters in machine controlled districts of large cities would be easily controlled without the protection of a secret ballot. Nor would the intimidation and corrupt influence be confined to such districts.

The evidence is quite strong that even in the most respectable districts there is considerable danger of corrupt influence in hotly contested elections, when the conflicting forces are determined to win at all costs. One could well imagine the pressure which under a system of home voting would be brought to bear upon voters in a hotly contested election, say, when different religious groups were battling with one another, or when some question like public ownership or prohibition was at stake. Home voting would lay open the election process so widely to intimidation and corrupt influence that such practices would be inevitable, and having once been started, they would become a tradition.

It is argued by the proponents of this form of voting that the severe penalty against election frauds would protect the voter against bribery and intimidation. This is utterly unconvincing. Bribery, corruption, and other election frauds have not been stopped or seriously deterred in this country by penal provisions. These election frauds are usually carried out by a political machine which can offer security against the criminal provisions of the law. Conviction for election frauds is so rare that the criminal provisions in the statutes do not insure honest elections.

It is contended also that the natural pride of the great majority of voters will prevent them from being corruptly influenced. Custom and traditions are more powerful factors than pride and conscience in such matters. The wholesale corruption of voters, both in this country and in England in the past, under an election system which made it possible, indicates that when once such practices are established they are looked upon as a matter of course, and do not incur social disapprobation. We cannot look to the pride and good conscience of the mass of voters to protect us against such practices.

The proponents of home voting assert also that this method of voting will greatly increase the total vote cast, and even though there is a small amount of dishonest voting, corrupt influence, and bribery, it will be offset by the larger vote cast which will be honest. This argument hinges, to be sure, upon the assumption that a larger vote will actually be polled under the use of home voting. There is no proof that such will be the case. The extremely limited use of absent voting would tend to disprove this. A large percentage of the absent ballots mailed out are never returned. The experience which private organizations have had with mail voting does not warrant any optimistic prophecies that mail voting will greatly increase the vote cast.

The argument has been advanced that even though it be granted that home voting is unsuitable for some of the large cities with strong party machines, this should not prevent experimentation with it in other communities and its adoption in case it proves to be satisfactory. It would, indeed, be foolish to shape our election laws and practice to meet the requirements of a few of the largest cities. It is possible that home voting might work quite satisfactorily in some communities where the dangers of bribery and intimidation were slight. This form of voting would seem to be particularly suited to sparsely settled rural districts, where the holding of elections at official polling places is both expensive and troublesome to the voters. On the whole, however, it must be said that the danger of bribery and corrupt influence of voters is not confined to a few large cities, and consequently the adoption of mail voting would appear to be dangerous in almost any community.

To summarize, mail voting does not offer any great promise of improvement in election administration; it is by no means certain that it would increase the vote cast, and it might have just the opposite effect; it would be contrary to the election experience of this and other countries in that it would nullify many of the protective features of the Australian ballot and would incur the danger of a repetition of the bribery, coercion, and corrupt influence which once existed widely. It is undoubtedly true that home voting would be a convenience to many voters, and would afford the members of the family an opportunity to discuss their votes together and to mark the ballot with greater deliberation and care, but this advantage could be secured by mailing to each voter a sample ballot, preferably reduced in size, which the voter could study and mark, taking it with him to the polls.

Harris, *supra* note 11, at 301-05.

Conclusion

In closing, I respectfully urge this Committee to consider the evidence as a call to strengthen and modernize the election-integrity framework that undergirds public confidence in our federal election. The best available registration and turnout data do not indicate widespread problems with ballot access; eligible citizens (who desire to do so) are registering and participating at high rates. The current data reflects, as history documents, that the weakening of long-established procedural safeguards create unnecessary uncertainty and erode public trust in elected leaders. Thoughtful, targeted legislative action to reinforce election integrity will enhance confidence in elections while protecting access for eligible voters.

I appreciate the Committee's attention to this important issue, and I thank you for the opportunity to appear today and share these views.

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much.

Ms. Brinson Bell, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF KAREN BRINSON BELL

Ms. BRINSON BELL. Thank you, Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Karen Brinson Bell, and from June 1, 2019, until May 14, 2025, I had the honor of serving as North Carolina's chief election official and the executive director of the State Board of Elections.

I oversaw the voting process for more than 7.5 million registered voters and led the 100 county boards of elections through hurricanes, a global pandemic, and record-setting turnout.

Since 2006, I have served in various roles at the county, State, and national levels within the elections profession. Like my colleagues across the country, my work is always nonpartisan.

As principal and co-founder of the firm Advance Elections, I now consult with election officials across our country on improving resilience in emergency situations and securing our elections.

I was proud to testify last year before the Subcommittee on Elections, and I thank Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Sewell for the opportunity to bring to Congress the story of the people of western North Carolina who did heroic work to maintain voting access in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene.

I know from firsthand experience that election officials at the State and local level historically have not and currently do not receive sufficient support from our Federal partners.

All of the Members of this Committee were elected by ballots that were prepared and paid for almost entirely by State and local governments.

Everything that ensured that your election was accessible to voters, that only eligible voters could vote, and that their ballots could be counted as cast, all of it was run by local and State officials. Nearly all of it, 96 percent—yes, 96 percent—was paid for by State and local governments.

Congress has appropriated some money through the critical Election Security Grants program, including $45 million in the latest round of appropriations.

While welcome, $45 million is in no way sufficient for election officials grappling with rising costs and increasing threats.

I have reviewed the MEGA Act and the SAVE America Act, both of which would impose substantial new Federal mandates. I did Control F for the dollar sign, and I did not see a single dollar, much less the hundreds of millions needed to implement these changes.

The rigid photo ID mandates would sweep away current systems even in most States with voter ID law, placing additional ID requirements in many States. The bill would require equipping election offices with the means to verify IDs for every mail-in ballot, requiring an investment in new technology and additional staff.

For context, the recent inclusion of photo ID documentation with the return of the ballot in North Carolina required a significant redesign of the mail ballot envelope.

It led to increased postage costs and necessitated the development of administrative rules, including a public comment period, submission to the Rules Review Commission, extensive training, and voter outreach.

The implementation of voter ID in North Carolina alone was a multi-million-dollar endeavor with a considerable runway and years of litigation.

Next, the bill's nationwide documentary proof of citizenship mandates would require local election officials to act as document verifiers, an enormously expanded role for which they are not staffed or funded.

Let us not forget the bigger picture. A nationwide proof of citizenship mandate that does not allow States to tailor policies to their own needs would disenfranchise eligible voters.

When Kansas attempted to implement a proof of citizenship in 2014, even with a year-and-a-half of implementation time, 12 percent of applicants were denied registration for failing to provide documentary proof of citizenship. Virtually all of those denied registration were, in fact, eligible.

The bill's list maintenance procedures are also unnecessarily burdensome, costly, and do not provide flexibility to account for the differences among the more than 10,000 election jurisdictions in the United States.

Nearly every provision in this bill would sweep away current effective systems of election administration across the country without support or funding.

As I bring my testimony to a close, elections are run by people in and of the communities where they are taking place. The needs of communities in Wyoming differ from those in Michigan and North Carolina.

Decentralized election administration is a feature, not a bug, of our democratic system. In this regard, I agree with you, Chairman Steil, when you stated at a hearing in this very room in March 2023 that election administration looks different in every State and that it is our Federalist approach in action.

I appreciate your longstanding opposition to un-American calls to nationalize our elections, Mr. Chairman, and I presume it continues.

In closing, election officials have a simple request of Congress: That you help share their burdens, not add to them. The bill under discussion today does not meet that simple test.

Thank you. I look forward to answering your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Brinson Bell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KAREN BRINSON BELL

Testimony of Karen Brinson Bell

Committee on House Administration Hearing
"Make Elections Great Again: How to Restore Trust and Integrity in Federal Elections"
February 10, 2026

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Karen Brinson Bell, and from June 1, 2019 until May 14, 2025, I had the honor of serving as North Carolina's chief election official and the executive director of the State Board of Elections, overseeing the voting process for more than 7.5 million registered voters and leading the 100 county boards of elections through hurricanes, a global pandemic, and record-setting turnout. During my time there, the Board won multiple awards from the Election Assistance Commission including for emergency planning and innovation in election administration.

Since 2006, I have served in various roles at the county, state, and national levels within the elections profession. As principal and co-founder of the firm Advance Elections, I now consult with election officials across our country on improving resilience in emergency situations, securing our elections, and furthering the administration of elections through evidence-based research. Elections administration is my profession. Like my colleagues across the country, I'm nonpartisan in the work I do to ensure that the voters are served and able to cast their ballot fairly and accurately.

I was proud to testify last year before the Subcommittee on Elections to discuss the heroic work of election officials and emergency management professionals to maintain voting access in the midst of deadly Hurricane Helene.[1] I thank Chairwoman Lee and Ranking Member Sewell for the opportunity to bring to Congress the story of the people of Western North Carolina. These brave men and women joined together in the midst of so much destruction to save lives and keep our democracy running. Election officials are essential workers to our communities and our democracy. We don't stop an election when an emergency strikes. Rather, we find a way, no matter the conditions, to get people to the polls and to maintain security and integrity in all of our operations.

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[1] Subcommittee on Elections, Committee on House Administration, "Maintaining Election Operations in the Face of Natural Disasters," September 16, 2025 [LINK].

Yet, election officials at the state and local level historically have not, and currently do not, receive sufficient support from our federal partners. All of the members of this committee, all of you, were elected in elections administered by your local election official. You were elected by ballots that were prepared and paid for almost entirely by state and local governments. The voters who cast those ballots for you were checked into their polling places by poll workers hired and paid by their local government. And they were paid very little. In Onslow County in my state, for example, election chief judges receive just $219 for grueling hours running a polling place on election day.[2] The tabulators that counted the ballots cast for you, the voter registration systems that ensured the voter rolls were accurate and up to date, the cybersecurity experts, security cameras, and bullet proof glass that secured those systems… Everything that ensured that your election was accessible to voters, that only eligible voters could vote and that their ballots would be counted as cast, all of it was run by county and municipal election officials in partnership with state election officials.[3]

And your election was paid for by them too.[4] 96% of election costs, let me say that again, 96% of election costs, are borne by state and local governments.[5] Congress sometimes has appropriated Election Security Grants through the Help America Vote Act process. These grants have been essential for states improving their election systems and hardening them against physical and cyber threats. Yet, the level of appropriation has not met the need. Just two weeks ago Congress appropriated $45 million in election security funds for the entire country.[6] While welcome, and I do stress that these funds are welcome, it is in no way sufficient for election officials grappling with rising costs and increasing threats. During the first Trump Administration, Congress supported election security grants to the tune of around $400 million. The need has grown, the support has not.[7]

I've searched through the bill being discussed by this committee and the bill up for debate before the House this week for implementation funding for the substantial new federal mandates they propose. I control-F'ed for the dollar sign and I did not see a

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[2] Onslow County Elections, "Poll Worker Resources," accessed February 8, 2026 [LINK].
[3] National Conference of State Legislatures and the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, "Helping America Vote: Election Administration in the United States," 2025 [LINK].
[4] Center for Election Innovation and Research, "Who Pays for Election Administration?," October 2025 [LINK].
[5] Charles Stewart III, MIT Election Data and Science Lab, National Institute for Civil Discourse, "The Cost of Conducting Elections," May 16, 2022 [LINK].
[6] Steny Hoyer, "Hoyer Floor Remarks in Support of FY 2026 FSGG Appropriations Bill," January 14, 2026 [LINK].
[7] Bipartisan Policy Center and the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, "Measuring the Impact of Recent Grants to Election Administrators Under the Help America Vote Act," December 2024 [LINK].

single dollar, much less the hundreds of million dollars needed to implement these changes.

I am especially concerned by some provisions of the bill under discussion today that would dramatically increase burdens on voters and on election officials.

As I have noted, the bill includes a series of unfunded mandates that, if enacted, would impose significant costs on states, local governments, and millions of American voters and taxpayers. To take a few of the major provisions in the MEGA Act:

The rigid photo ID mandates would sweep away current systems even in most states with a voter ID law in place. In addition to the bill's requirements being more burdensome than those of many states, the bill would require equipping election offices with the means to verify IDs for every mail-in ballot. This means an investment in new software and additional staff to handle the manual verification and secure storage of millions of images or numbers.

For context, the recent inclusion of photo ID documentation with the return of the ballot in North Carolina required a significant redesign of the mail ballot envelope in North Carolina, increased postage costs, necessitated development of administrative rules including a public comment period and submission to the Rules Review Commission, training, and voter outreach. The overall implementation of voter ID was a multi-million dollar endeavor with a considerable runway and years of litigation.

I want to pause on one particularly puzzling piece of the photo ID requirement - the fact that overseas military service members voters are exempt from this requirement, but their spouses and dependents are not. I can think of no policy reason to justify this unprecedented exception to the exception.

Back to the bill's main provisions. The nationwide documentary proof of citizenship mandates would require local election offices to act as document verifiers, an enormously expanded role for which they are not staffed or funded. In addition, while there is a backup procedure in the bill for voters to attest to citizenship when lacking one of the approved documents, the bill would require each state to determine what proof would be acceptable evidence in such an instance. This would create a confusing patchwork of documentation structures for voters and election officials, violation of which would be a federal crime.

But let's not forget the bigger picture - rigid documentary proof of citizenship laws, especially a nationwide mandate that does not allow states to tailor policies to their own

needs, would disenfranchise eligible voters. When Kansas attempted to implement a proof of citizenship system in 2014, 12% of applicants were denied registration for failing to provide documentary proof of citizenship. Yet, ultimately, more than 99% of those who were initially rejected were in fact eligible.[8] 12% may not sound like a large number, but at a national scale that would mean millions of eligible voters would be disenfranchised.

The Kansas law also provided for a year and a half of implementation lead time. The MEGA Act does provide implementation lead time, but less than one year. The SAVE America Act, being considered on the House floor this week, provides basically no implementation time.

The MEGA Act's list maintenance procedures are similarly unnecessarily burdensome, costly, and do not provide flexibility to account for the differences among the more than 10,000 elections jurisdictions in the United States.[9] Some states maintain control of voter rolls, but in other states that falls to the county or locality.[10] This bill would place yet another burden on these governments with no funding.

The bill would also overhaul the REAL ID system overnight, requiring citizenship to be indicated on the face of an ID when almost no state does that now. The bill would allow any private citizen to sue elections offices when they believe there is a violation of the bill's requirements, and local governments may choose to divert millions of dollars from public services into budget line-items for legal fees to fight lawsuits over technicalities in the Act's implementation. Fear of frivolous litigation or the bill's new criminal penalties could force many elections officials to quit, at a time when the field has lost many experienced professionals since 2020 amid lack of funding and physical threats to officials' safety.[11] I've witnessed this firsthand in North Carolina, with 70 changes in county election directors during my 6-year tenure. Such turnover puts higher demands on training, increases risk of error, and strips the profession of institutional knowledge.

Nearly every provision in this bill would sweep away current, effective systems of election administration across the country without support or funding.[12]

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[8] Institute for Responsive Government, "The SAVE Act: How a Proof of Citizenship Requirement Would Impact Elections," January 30, 2025 [LINK]; John Hanna, The Associated Press, "Kansas once required voters to prove citizenship. That didn't work out so well," December 29, 2024 [LINK].
[9] National Conference of State Legislatures, "Election Administration at State and Local Levels," January 13, 2026 [LINK].
[10] Karen L. Shanton, Congressional Research Service, "The State and Local Role in Election Administration: Duties and Structures," March 4, 2019 [LINK].
[11] Issue One, "Turning the Tide on Turnover," February 3, 2026 [LINK].
[12] Bipartisan Policy Center, Institute for Responsive Government, R Street Institute, "United in Security: How Every State Protects Your Vote in 2026," February 2, 2026 [LINK].

So when we begin conversations about restoring trust and integrity to American elections I begin here. Election officials have repeatedly come to Congress to ask the federal government to bear its share of the cost of administering elections.[13] Election funding is a rare area of bipartisan agreement in the election space. Congresses led by both parties have provided support for election security.[14]

Elections are run by people in and of the communities where they are taking place: civil servants and local volunteers who understand the geographic and logistical needs of their specific communities. The needs of communities in Wyoming differ from those in Michigan and in North Carolina. Decentralized election administration is a feature, not a bug, of our democratic system.

In this regard I agree with you Chairman Steil, when you stated at a hearing in this very room in March of 2023 that "Election administration looks different in every State, and that is our Federalist approach in action."[15]

I could not agree more Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your longstanding opposition to un-American calls to nationalize our elections, I presume it continues. And I welcome this committee's continued support for the dedicated public servants who administer elections at the state and local level.

Election officials have a simple request of Congress, that you help share their burdens, not add to them. The bill under discussion today does not meet that simple test.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

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[13] Carrie Levine, Votebeat, "Congress hears pleas for more election funding. Will it respond?," October 6, 2025 [LINK].
[14] Karen L. Shanton, Congressional Research Service, "Election Administration: Federal Grant Programs for States and Localities," May 30, 2025 [LINK].
[15] Committee on House Administration, "American Confidence in Elections: State Tools to Promote Voter Confidence," April 27, 2023 [LINK].

Chairman STEIL. Thank you very much.

I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for the purpose of asking questions. We will alternate sides.

I would like to start with you, Secretary Gray, if I can. We got a lot of information there from Ms. Brinson Bell, echoes a lot of the comments I hear from my Democrats. We have got a great empirical case study in the State of Wyoming, so maybe we can learn a little bit about exactly what took place.

We heard that implementing photo ID requires extensive training. I went and bought a six-pack of beer in Wisconsin the other day. The clerk, I do not think he had extensive training, but, boy, he was able to look at my ID, confirm my birth date, confirm it was me, and then was able to sell me a six-pack of beer.

Is it your experience in the State of Wyoming that folks in Wyoming need extensive training to implement photo identification?

Mr. GRAY. Chairman Steil, thank you for that question.

My experience is that this is a common-sense requirement. In fact, as my testimony talked about, in the lead-up to us passing voter ID we would have a lot of Wyomingites that would show their ID and it was not required, and they were outraged.

Chairman STEIL. Sure. Because you need a photo ID when you——

Mr. GRAY. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. board an airplane, open a bank account——

Mr. GRAY. Exactly.

The CHAIRMAN [continuing]. buy a six-pack of beer. There is no extensive training that is required when you implemented photo ID in Wyoming, correct?

Mr. GRAY. No extensive training.

Chairman STEIL. Then we heard hundreds of millions of dollars. There are some people in this building that could not spend enough money of taxpayer dollars to do all sorts of stuff.

I am thinking to myself, I would board an airplane, I would buy a six-pack of beer, I have to show my photo identification. For the 2024 DNC convention, you had to show your ID. There was a Senator just last week who held a town hall, required people to show their photo identification to come to his town hall.

Massive costs associated with photo identification in your experience in Wyoming?

Mr. GRAY. No massive cost, Chairman Steil. In fact, we have a provision in our voter ID law that an individual can request an ID, have a hardship exemption if that is required.

Under Wyoming law right now, the requirements in the MEGA Act would impose no further costs because we already allow for attaining that ID on a hardship exemption for purposes of voting. There is no further costs.

Chairman STEIL. Which makes total sense, right? If you truly have somebody that is indigent, does not have the funds to do it, the State should be able to provide that photo ID. Wisconsin does the same thing. There is no cost to administer the elections in this regard.

Wyoming implemented, one of the handful of States not in the NVRA, so many States are restricted and prevented from providing

citizenship verification. Wyoming is in a unique position where you could actually implement citizenship verification, very different than maybe the State of Arizona, for example, that has tried to work through that.

Let us look at the experience that we have in the State of Wyoming. You implemented citizenship verification. We have heard from some of our colleagues that millions or thousands or hundreds of people would be disenfranchised.

What was the experience in the State of Wyoming after you had your election after you have implemented citizenship verification?

Mr. GRAY. Well, thank you, Chairman Steil, for that question.

We had a very clean bond election last year under the documentary proof of citizenship requirement. It was very clean, no issues, no complaints. It was just very well-run. People were excited that we implemented this common-sense measure.

Chairman STEIL. The fearmongering that we are hearing today did not materialize in the State of Wyoming from a cost standpoint, from a disenfranchisement standpoint. What you ended up with was a good, solid, clean election.

Do you think people's confidence in elections increased in the State of Wyoming as these common-sense procedures were implemented?

Mr. GRAY. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STEIL. Do you think they should be implemented in all 50 States?

Mr. GRAY. Absolutely. Yes. I believe it should be implemented in all 50 States.

Chairman STEIL. I want to finalize on one item. You noted that in the State of Wyoming ballots need to be in by the end of election day, by the time polls close.

At the end of the 2024 election, I went to the State of California, was joined by a couple of my colleagues from California there. I went to Los Angeles County Central Count. You would see thousands of ballots coming in, literally by the truckload, after elections closed, because they allow ballots that are postmarked with a huge exception in that law to arrive after the election day. They are being counted.

You do not know California results for House races that were competitive. If there was a competitive statewide race, we would not probably have known results for that either.

When you delay those results, does that instill confidence, or does that hurt Americans' confidence in our elections?

Mr. GRAY. It damages confidence, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman STEIL. It 100 percent damages confidence.

You can envision going and playing a card game. Imagine—I am not a card player—but if you went to a casino and played cards and you are playing with the dealer and the very end of the game with that dealer, the dealer says, "You know what, I am not going to flip over my cards for three or four days." You could be playing with the Pope, and you would not have a lot of confidence in exactly what is taking place.

This is all about instilling confidence in our elections, that Americans have confidence. The Georgia election law, the laws and the

reforms in the State of Wyoming prove that you can do this correctly, that you can increase confidence in our elections.

What Georgia has shown us is when you increase confidence in our elections, people will participate. It is why the State of Georgia's election participation remained high and it is why Wyoming is doing a good job as well.

I will yield back. I will now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Morelle, for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I do want to acknowledge I have complete faith in the Pope. If he told me something, I would believe it.

Last week, referring to the State of Minnesota, President Trump said—and this is a direct quote—"I won the State of Minnesota three times, but I got no credit for it."

Congress three times certified Minnesota's electoral college votes, three times, including twice under House Republican majorities. Congress certified Donald Trump as the loser of the Presidential election in Minnesota.

Reminding the witnesses you are under oath, just a simple question. We can start from right to left.

Do you have evidence or reasonably if Congress incorrectly certified Minnesota's results due to widespread fraud in Minnesota?

Ms. Brinson Bell?

Ms. BRINSON BELL. I have no reason to believe that Congress had—Congress rightfully certified the election.

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Nobile?

Mr. NOBILE. I do not have any evidence.

Mr. MORELLE. Ms. Bollin?

Ms. BOLLIN. I do not have any evidence either.

Mr. MORELLE. Mr. Secretary?

Mr. GRAY. I believe there were issues, I do.

Mr. MORELLE. What does that mean? I asked if you think there was widespread——

Mr. GRAY. I believe there were issues out there that need to be looked into. I think that from an election integrity perspective, to perceive that we are not going to even ask questions and the way that the modern day Democrat Party, when people ask questions, have mocked them, is very troubling to me.

Mr. MORELLE. Well, I would just say this, sir. You are under oath. You are here as an expert witness. If you have evidence that there was fraud in Minnesota, I think we should be—the Committee Members would very much welcome it.

Otherwise, I assume—and, frankly, I think I do not appreciate your partisan remarks. I notice that you left out in your opening statement but it is in your written testimony, you referred to leftist goons when you are talking about people who bring cases in front of a court.

Let me move on. I would love to ask—Ms. Brinson Bell, I appreciate you being here, and I appreciate your past testimony around the work that you did in North Carolina and your comments regarding State and local officials. You have, obviously, a tremendous amount of experience.

This week Republicans are bringing the SAVE America Act to the floor, presumably—it is in committee, the Rules Committee

later—a bill that imposes strict new documentary proof of citizenship requirements in order for American citizens to register to vote.

Like the bill we are discussing here, the SAVE America Act would be effective immediately. Many States, including North Carolina, and have primary elections literally in just a few weeks. I wonder if you could just comment.

Would States even have time to comply with such a massive change with Federal elections just around the corner?

Ms. BRINSON BELL. Thank you, sir.

I would just propose to everyone that when we talk about immediate implementation of any type of change in election administration, that that is unworkable.

I point that out because Representative Bollin, she pointed out some wonderful pieces of legislation that we have implemented across our country effectively, NVRA, UOCAVA, so forth and so on. They all had runways. They all had funding. They all had training in ways that we were able to support the implementation.

That would be my note of caution. North Carolina is in the election. Ballots have already gone out. Early voting starts on Thursday.

Mr. MORELLE. Yes.

Ms. BRINSON BELL. The election is underway, and it will be for many other States very soon.

Mr. MORELLE. Very good.

I keep hearing about American elections not being secure. You did this for a number of years. Are American elections secure? You talked about local and State. Just your opinion on whether American elections are secure.

Ms. BRINSON BELL. Yes, sir. I believe that is—the security of our elections has been proven. I believe that is why Congress has been able to certify the elections, and our legislatures and our State boards and our Secretaries of State.

In North Carolina alone, we have conducted post-election audits since 2006, reconciliation practices that prove the security of our elections.

We have also had record-breaking turnout, as the citizens have known about the additional efforts that we have put in place in North Carolina.

I firmly believe that when someone believes that the system is secure, when they believe that a system works, that is when they participate.

That is why North Carolinians turned out over 75 percent in 2020.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you.

Just one last question, as I am running out of time.

The provision and the mail by voting elections alone would upend the way elections are conducted for nearly 70 million Americans.

How much does it cost to run a statewide election in North Carolina? Do you know?

Ms. BRINSON BELL. A statewide election in North Carolina, a recent survey of the 2024 election, was $35 million.

Mr. MORELLE. Just in North Carolina?

Ms. BRINSON BELL. Just in North Carolina.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you.

Before I yield back, Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record two pieces.

First of all, a statement in opposition to the bill from the League of Women Voters, a second from FairVote Action, as well as a letter from the National Association of Counties sharing concerns with the bill; and into the record a column by former the Maricopa County recorder, a Republican from Arizona, which makes clear that Republican claims about voter fraud are bogus.

Chairman STEIL. Without objection.

[The information referred to follows:]

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF THE UNITED STATES

Statement for the League of Women Voters of the United States
US House of Representatives
Committee on House Administration
Hearing: Make Elections Great Again Act: How to Restore Trust and Integrity in Federal Elections
February 10, 2026

The League of Women Voters of the United States (the League) shares grave concerns and strong opposition to the *Make American Elections Great Again Act*. This bill is not an attempt to secure our elections, but rather an attempt to make it harder for eligible Americans to register and vote, while also systematically making it harder for election administration officials to perform the tasks required to administer our elections. The League has been involved in the major policy fights to draft, pass, and implement the *National Voter Registration Act* (NVRA), the *Voting Rights Act* (VRA), and the *Help America Vote Act* (HAVA). We know pro-voter legislation when we see it, and the *Make American Elections Great Again Act* is not the solution we need.

The League is a 105-year-old nonpartisan nonprofit committed to ensuring that everyone is represented in our democracy. We are a grassroots organization comprised of over one million members and supporters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia across more than 800 local and state Leagues. The League focuses on advocacy, education, litigation, and organizing to advance our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy. We base our work on policy positions developed from multi-year studies and derived through consensus among League membership, to ensure our advocacy reflects best practices and a nationwide perspective.

As one of the longest-running and largest, nonpartisan, volunteer-driven, voter registration organizations in the nation, the League brings deep, unmatched expertise around voter registration. In 2024, the League supported well over 400,000 people in registering to vote or updating their voter registration through in-person field voter registration events. Our leagues registered more than 70,000 young people at schools and colleges across the country; we also registered more than 90,000 new citizens at naturalization ceremonies. Our award-winning website VOTE411.org helps voters make a plan to vote by providing information to millions of voters every election cycle about what they need to take with them when they vote, where their polling locations are, and who is on their ballot. Elections can be complicated. The League helps

make the voting process clear and accessible, ensuring people have the information they need to participate and make their voices heard.

The work the League does would fundamentally change if the *Make Elections Great Again Act* is implemented, and voters—and our country—would suffer. The following provisions are of greatest concern to the League.

Documentary Proof of Citizenship

The League opposed the inclusion of documentary proof-of-citizenship requirements when the *NVRA* was debated in 1989 and again before it was finally passed in 1993. A report from the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration in 1989 debated the issue fully and the committee findings in that report are still relevant: (1) the right of citizens in the US to vote is a fundamental right, (2) it is the duty of the federal, state, and local governments to promote the exercise of that right, and (3) discriminatory or unfair registration laws and procedures have a direct and damaging effect on voter participation in elections for federal office and disproportionately harm voter participation by various groups, including racial minorities.[1]

In 1993, Congress passed the NVRA with bipartisan support, but not before additional debate over documentary proof of citizenship was part of the conversation. The legislation passed without the provision in the conference process because it "would have eviscerated the mail-in registration provisions and stripped the bill of its uniform and nondiscriminatory components," US Representative John Conyers (D-MI).[2]

Adding provisions requiring every eligible voter to provide documentary proof of citizenship, such as a passport or birth certificate, to register to vote could prevent millions of Americans from registering and casting a ballot. Currently, voters in every state are required to affirm or verify their citizenship status when registering to vote. The complicated, limited list of documentation this bill requires would create barriers to every eligible voter participating in our election process.

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[1] US Senate Committee on Rules and Administration. (1989). Establishing National Voter Registration Procedures for Presidential and Congressional Elections, and Other Purposes (S. Rept. No. 101-140). Government Publishing Office.
[2] https://www.votebeat.org/2025/03/31/proof-of-citizenship-law-trump-executive-order-elections-nvra/

Every eligible voter— particularly rural voters, voters of color, and nearly 70 million married women who have changed their last names, and other voters who have been historically marginalized and already face obstacles in accessing the ballot box— would be unnecessarily burdened by this legislation at some point when they update or change their voter registration information.

Photo ID Requirements

The legislation also adds a photo ID requirement to cast a ballot, which is stricter than the voter ID requirements currently in place in every other state, except Ohio. The list of acceptable identification prohibits the use of student IDs, even when issued by a state-run institution, and requires the use of Tribal IDs that have an expiration date, which is not a common practice of tribal communities.[3] While voter photo ID laws aim to prevent in-person voter impersonation, an almost non-existent form of voter fraud, other types of voter impersonation are similarly rare and not cause for significant concern. Time and time again, voter photo ID laws are proven to be ineffective tools to fight voter fraud, in the rare instances it does take place. In fact, out of 250,000,000 votes cast by mail between 2000 and 2020, there were 193 criminal convictions.[4] By those numbers, a person is more likely to be struck by lightning than they are to commit voter fraud. Further, measures are already in place to detect irregularities and investigate potential cases of voter fraud, making the need for further legislation even less.

Mail and Absentee Ballots

Provisions in this legislation would end universal mail voting and require any eligible voter who wishes to cast a ballot by mail to submit an application to request a mail ballot. Currently, in the US, eight states (California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, and Washington) and the District of Columbia conduct elections entirely by mail.[5] These vote-by-mail systems allow voters to fill in their ballots during an election period and return them by inserting their ballot into a secrecy sleeve, then into a separate mailing envelope, signing an affidavit on the envelope, and returning the ballot through the mail or a designated drop box. If the provisions of this bill were to go into effect, it would fundamentally change the election systems for the states that conduct their elections in this manner. It would alter accessibility for voters with disabilities, rural voters, and force other voters to jump through hoops to vote in a

[3] https://vote.narf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/obstacles_at_every_turn.pdf?inline=1
[4] https://www.businessinsider.com/voter-election-fraud-statistics-rare-president-biden-trump-2020-2020-11
[5] https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/table-18-states-with-all-mail-elections

way they have become accustomed. In states like Oregon, Washington, and Colorado, which have been voting by mail for over 20 years, this would require significant voter education and add an extra step for election administrators, which would take time and money to implement.

Voter List Maintenance Requirements

The League supports voter registration systems, including list maintenance practices, which are transparent, accurate, fair, and that identify and reach out to unregistered voters, but provisions in the legislation to enhance voter list maintenance greatly miss the mark.

Under current provisions in the NVRA, there is a quiet period of 90 days preceding a primary or general election.[6] This means that no voters may be systematically removed from a voter roll unless they specifically request it. This ensures that eligible voters can show up on Election Day, request or cast a mail ballot, or vote at an early voting location, and have their name listed on the voter roll. Provisions in this legislation that would end that practice could disenfranchise voters by removing them from the system, forcing them to cast a provisional ballot, or, worse, preventing them from voting at all.

General list maintenance is also required under the NVRA, but this bill requires states to conduct it every 30 days. This would create a burden on election officials. Having to cull through and verify the address and eligibility of every voter on the roll, which often contains millions of people, every month is not sustainable practice.

Voter Roll Data Sharing

Recent efforts by the federal government to consolidate data threaten to disenfranchise eligible voters, subject Americans to unwarranted investigations, and create unprecedented security risks by placing sensitive, personal information in a single target-rich system. The League has worked to block the efforts to operate these systems and to order the deletion of unlawfully collected data. At the center of this legislation's requirements is the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) *Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE)* system. The SAVE system is a national citizenship database pooling Social Security Administration data known to be unreliable. While it is currently being used by some states to purge voter rolls and open criminal

[6] https://www.justice.gov/crt/nvra-list-maintenance-guidance

investigations, it was not built to verify voter eligibility and is not an acceptable database for this type of oversight.

The League of Women Voters urges the Committee to REJECT the *Make American Elections Great Again Act*. Our democracy is strongest when eligible voters can register and cast their ballots securely, accessibly, and without unnecessary obstacles, and when election officials have the tools and resources to administer elections effectively. Voters do not need MORE obstacles in having their voices heard.

For questions, please feel free to reach out to our staff via Jessica Jones Capparell, Director of Government Affairs at jjones@lwv.org or Kristen Kern, Federal Policy and Advocacy Manager for the League of Women Voters of the US, at kkern@lwv.org.

FAIRVOTEACTION

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Statement for the Record:
Deb Otis, Director of Research and Policy at FairVote Action

In OPPOSITION of H.R. 7300 (the "Make Elections Great Again" Act)
February 10, 2026
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on House Administration

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express FairVote Action's opposition to H.R. 7300 (the "Make Elections Great Again" Act).

FairVote Action is a national nonpartisan organization that researches and advocates for reforms that improve our elections. We are seen as a leading national resource on a number of election topics, including ranked choice voting (RCV) – which the Make Elections Great Again Act would prohibit in federal general elections.

The Make Elections Great Again (MEGA) Act is a voter suppression bill. The bill would make it harder for Americans to vote by eliminating mail-in voting, imposing strict photo ID requirements for all in-person voting, creating penalties around voter registration, and imposing mid-cycle election changes.

Broadly, the MEGA Act is full of unfunded and unnecessary mandates that would undermine our federalist system of election administration without making voting more secure. Specifically, the effort to prohibit ranked choice voting in federal general elections is anti-democratic – disregarding the will of voters who have chosen to use RCV in Maine and Alaska. Voters in both states have voted in favor of ranked choice voting multiple times.

Moreover, this prohibition would disenfranchise military voters in Georgia, who use ranked choice ballots to participate in federal runoff elections – rather than having to return a second absentee ballot in the short window between a general election and a runoff.

Ranked choice voting is a party-neutral reform that has had a valuable impact in the cities, counties, and states where it has been used – ensuring that candidates for office need a majority of the vote to win. Ranked choice voting has (1) helped parties nominate more viable candidates who bring their party together; (2) offered voters more choices on their ballots; and (3) promoted more positive, issues-focused campaigns.

14 million voters in approximately 50 jurisdictions across the United States use RCV. It is an increasingly popular electoral reform with successes including:

- Legislatures in 14 states have passed RCV bills since 2020, including "local options" legislation that allows municipalities in Virginia, Maine, Utah, and Colorado to use RCV.[1]

[1] Ranked choice voting legislation. FairVote. (2025).

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- Voters have approved RCV ballot measures in 33 of the last 34 cities to vote on it, and in Maine and Alaska.[2]
- Exit polling and ballot data in blue, red, and purple jurisdictions across the country finds that voters who use RCV find it easy, like it, and want to expand it to more elections.[3]
- Alaska became the first state to elect its governor, state legislature, and federal offices using RCV. 84%[4] of Alaska voters said the system was simple to use and 60%[5] said it resulted in more competitive races than past elections.
- The Virginia Republican Party used RCV in 2021 to nominate candidates for statewide office[6] and went on to sweep the offices of governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general. They also used RCV in 2022 to nominate four congressional candidates, and in 2023 to nominate a state delegate candidate.[7]
- In 2024, the U.S. Virgin Islands Republican Party used RCV in its presidential primary, and voters in Maine used RCV ballots in both major parties' presidential primaries.[8]

In RCV elections, voters have the option to rank candidates in order of preference: first, second, third, and so on. If a candidate receives more than half of the first choices, they win, just like any other election. If not, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and voters who picked that candidate as "number 1" will have their votes count for their next choice. This process continues until one candidate wins a majority.

Voter Support and Understanding of Ranked Choice Voting

RCV offers voters greater choice, creating space for both voters and candidates to express a wide range of views. Voters may rank as many or as few candidates as they like but, in practice, most voters choose to use multiple rankings in order to express their full preferences. A median of 68% of voters choose to rank multiple candidates.[9] In highly competitive or highly publicized elections, the rate is even higher.

Most RCV winners are ranked among the top 3 choices by two-thirds of voters or more. This demonstrates a measure of broad consensus among voters. Winners of RCV races usually earn the most first choices as well.[7] When the winner is someone other than the leader in first-choice preferences, RCV has prevented an unfair outcome due to the majority splitting the vote.

Voters like and understand RCV. Exit polling results finds that voters in RCV jurisdictions overwhelmingly report that they like RCV and prefer it to their previous voting method.[10] In Utah, 82% of RCV voters found RCV easy to use and 94% were satisfied with the method they

[2] Ballot measures. FairVote. (2025).
[3] Exit Surveys: Voters Love Ranked Choice Voting. FairVote. (2025)
[4] Exit Polling Shows Alaskans Found Ranked Choice Voting Simple. Alaskans for Better Elections. (2024).
[5] Polling Shows Alaskan Voters Received Clear Instructions on the System, Found Ranking to be "Simple," and saw more Competitive Races. Alaskans for Better Elections. (2022).
[6] Ranked Choice Results and Analysis from Virginia Republican Convention. FairVote. (2021).
[7] The state of ranked choice voting in Virginia. UpVote Virginia. (2025).
[8] The 2024 presidential primaries and ranked choice voting. FairVote. (2024).
[9] Research and Data on RCV in Practice. FairVote. (2026).
[10] Exit Surveys: Voters Love Ranked Choice Voting. FairVote. (2025)

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used to cast their ballot.[11] In Alaska, 92%[12] of voters said they received instructions on how to rank their choices and 84% said RCV was "simple," including supermajorities of every ethnic group.[13] A 2023 Citizen Data poll found that over 60% of both Republicans and Democrats would support ranking candidates in a presidential primary.[14]

Voters understand RCV at the same level as traditional plurality voting.[15] Researchers have found no evidence of racial or ethnic differences in understanding of RCV.[16] Voter support for RCV tends to increase over time, as voters get more chances to use it.[17]

Ranked Choice Voting Improves Campaigns, Delivers Majority Winners, and Addresses the "Spoiler" Problem

Ranked choice voting ensures candidates must earn the support of the majority of voters to win, without requiring costly and low-turnout runoffs – where turnout drops by a median of 41%.[18] In RCV elections, if a voter's first-choice candidate can't win, their vote counts for their next choice without the need to return to the polls.

By allowing voters to make backup choices, RCV addresses the problems of vote-splitting and "spoiler" candidates that sometimes result in candidates winning without the support of a majority. In our current system, a majority may support a particular ideology or party, but split their votes among multiple candidates – allowing a candidate to win with a minority of the vote.

For example, the presence of Libertarian and third-party candidates has decided recent U.S. Senate elections in Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Montana.[19,20,21,22] In RCV elections, voters could rank the Libertarian candidate 1st and then rank either the Republican or Democratic candidate as their 2nd choice. Their votes would not be "wasted" or change the outcome of the race. Instead, they count for a backup-choice candidate who best represents their values, rather than accidentally helping elect someone who *least* represents them.

Research shows that RCV incentivizes more positive, issues-focused campaigning because candidates need to reach beyond a single base of voters. Instead, they must connect with more voters in order to win. Sometimes, this means appealing to be the second or third choice of voters who support a different candidate as their first choice. Issues-focused campaigning is more effective than negative campaigning in RCV elections. Studies have found that candidates use more positive language in debates,[23] voters in RCV cities perceived

[11] An Evaluation of the Ranked Choice Voting Pilot in Utah. Parry, A., Kidd, J., Erickson, M., & Scott, A. Utah Valley University. (2024).
[12] Alaska Exit Poll Results – New Election System. Patinkin Research Strategies. (2022).
[13] Exit Polling Shows Alaskans Found Ranked Choice Voting Simple. Alaskans for Better Elections. (2024).
[14] Citizen Data April 2023 Omnibus Survey Toplines. FairVote. (2023)
[15] 2014 Eagleton Poll California RCV Survey Results. FairVote. (2021).
[16] Self-Reported Understanding of Ranked-Choice Voting. Donovan, T., Tolbert, C. and Gracey, K. Social Science Quarterly. (2019).
[17] The 2017 Municipal Election: An Analysis & Recommendations. Minneapolis City Council. (2018).
[18] Low Turnout and High Cost in primary runoffs, 1994-2024. FairVote. (2024).
[19] 2024 Michigan Election Results. Michigan Voter Information Center. (2024).
[20] Silver State General Election Results 2022. Nevada Secretary of State. (2022).
[21] 2016 General Election Results. New Hampshire Secretary of State. (2016).
[22] 2012 Statewide General Election Canvass. Montana Secretary of State. (2012).
[23] Effect of Instant Run-off Voting on Participation and Civility. McGinn, E. (2020).

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less negativity compared to voters in non-RCV cities,[24,25] and newspaper articles in RCV cities are more positive than in non-RCV cities.[26]

This type of campaigning is particularly effective in helping parties produce strong nominees.[27] The Republican Party of Virginia used RCV in 2021 to nominate candidates for governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general. Each contest was highly competitive and each nominee earned only a plurality of first-choice support, but consolidated support during the RCV count and eventually prevailed with a majority win.[28] All three nominees went on to win the general election in November, the first time Republicans won any statewide office in Virginia since 2009. Additionally, Virginia Republicans used RCV to nominate four congressional candidates in 2022 and a state delegate candidate in 2023;[29] voters reported more positive primary campaigns, and the only RCV-nominated candidate in a competitive district outperformed expectations.[30,31] Numerous Virginia Republicans have attributed the success of their candidates to the use of RCV for their convention.[32,33,34]

RCV can also protect the votes of military and overseas voters in states and cities that hold runoff elections.[35] Instead of asking service members to return an absentee ballot in a short runoff window, seven states currently use or allow RCV for these voters (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina). In those states, military and overseas voters are allowed to rank their ballots rather than voting in two separate elections; in case of a runoff, their vote counts for their highest-ranked candidate who makes the runoff.

Georgia military voters use RCV in runoffs for federal general elections; H.R. 3700 would remove this option and risk disenfranchising Georgia service members. These voters would have to request, receive, and return two separate absentee ballots in two separate elections in less than a month – possibly from a warzone or at sea.[36] Alternatively, the state would need to change its entire election system – either getting rid of runoffs entirely or delaying them by several weeks.

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[24] Socioeconomic and Demographic Perspectives on Ranked Choice Voting in the Bay Area. FairVote. (2015).
[25] Santa Fe Voters Support Ranked Choice Voting and Have High Confidence in City Elections. FairVote. (2018).
[26] Using Campaign Communications to Analyze Civility in Ranked Choice Voting Elections. Kropf, M. Politics and Governance. (2021).
[27] Ranked choice voting can promote stronger political parties. FairVote. (2025).
[28] Ranked Choice Results and Analysis from Virginia Republican Convention. FairVote. (2021).
[29] The state of ranked choice voting in Virginia. UpVote Virginia. (2025).
[30] Measuring the Effects of Ranked Choice Voting in Republican Primaries. Center for Campaign Innovation. (2022).
[31] Parties, your non-majority nominees are failing. RCV can help. FairVote. (2022)
[32] Lessons Learned: The Strategy and Rationale Behind the 2021 Convention and Why It Worked. Ginsberg, M. The American Spectator. (2021).
[33] Opinion: Ranked choice voting helped elect Youngkin governor. Kathawalla, T. The Virginian-Pilot. (2021)
[34] Winning is the only thing: Ranked choice voting works for conservatives when they use it. Saxman, C. Cardinal News. (2024).
[35] Ranked choice voting protects military and overseas voters. Veterans for All Voters, We the Veterans, & FairVote. (2025).
[36] Georgia governor signs sweeping election regulations into law. There are even restrictions on snacks. NBC News. (2021).

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RCV's simplicity, representative outcomes, and positive experience for voters have made it an increasingly popular election method. It is recommended by Robert's Rules of Order and used in hundreds of private association elections.[37] RCV is also fully constitutional, having been twice upheld in federal courts, including in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2011 and in federal district courts in Maine in 2018 and 2020.[38]

The evidence has never been stronger that voters like RCV and engage with the ranked ballot. Parties can produce strong nominees with RCV, and implementation is a smooth process.[39] In most cities using RCV, preliminary results are produced on election night or the day after – the same timeline as in single-choice elections.[40]

Despite this record of success, H.R. 7300 would upend the election systems of states already using RCV – creating chaos, confusion, and new costs for local election officials. It would also unnecessarily deprive voters in other states of the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they'd like to adopt RCV. For these reasons, I urge you to reconsider and abandon advancing H.R. 7300.

FairVote Action is available to answer any other questions from the committee or provide additional data. You can reach me at dotis@fairvoteaction.org and my colleagues at info@fairvoteaction.org.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Deb Otis

Director of Policy and Research at FairVote Action

[37] Instant runoff voting used for major organizational elections based on Robert's Rules of Order. FairVote. (2009).
[38] Ranked-Choice Voting: Legal Challenges and Considerations for Congress. Congressional Research Service. (2022).
[39] Additional resources on RCV implementation are available from the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center at www.RCVReources.org.
[40] 79% of jurisdictions release RCV results within 24 hours. FairVote. (2025).

February 9, 2026

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman, Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Morelle
Ranking Member, Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and Members of the House Committee on Administration,

On behalf of America's 3,069 counties, parishes and boroughs, the National Association of Counties (NACo) writes to share concerns regarding the *Make Elections Great Again (MEGA) Act (H.R. 7300)*.

In partnership with the states, counties are frontline administrators of the vast majority of elections in the United States, with responsibilities for voter registration, ballot administration, vote tabulation, and post-election audits. Counties are strong advocates for practical, evidence-based policies that promote election integrity, voter confidence and world-class election administration.

Even as we highlight our significant concerns with the MEGA Act, we remain open and available to essential intergovernmental collaboration to improve our nation's election administration. We urge you to ensure any federal election legislation is workable, fully funded and developed with meaningful state and local input. As currently drafted, H.R. 7300 raises implementation and resource concerns for county election officials.

The MEGA Act would impose new federal requirements on county election offices without providing corresponding federal funding. The bill includes mandates related to documentary proof of citizenship for voter registration, expanded voter list maintenance obligations, photo identification requirements tied to provisional ballot curing, accelerated paper ballot requirements, ballot tracking and envelope design standards, and expanded record retention and public disclosure obligations. Collectively, these requirements would necessitate significant changes to county election procedures, staffing models, training programs, and election technology systems for counties nationwide.

The bill's requirements would substantially increase the administrative workloads and costs for counties, especially at a time with staff and resource capacity constraints. County election offices would need to allocate addition staff time to voter registration verification, database reconciliation, ballot track, record retention and public information requests. Counties would also incur costs related to staff training, voter education, technology upgrades, data integration, and system testing to meet new federal standards.

The MEGA Act conditions the use of existing federal election funds on compliance with new federal mandates and introduces additional civil and criminal liability exposure related to voter registration processing and ballot handling. Counties oppose criminal penalties for election officials acting in good faith and cautions against expanding private rights of action that undermine administrative stability and divert limited resources away from election administration. And although the bill does not explicitly mandate REAL ID, its reliance on citizenship indicators contained within state-issued identification and motor vehicle databases could require modifications to state and county data systems and coordination across agencies.

Several provisions also establish uniform federal timelines and prescriptive administrative standards. These requirements would affect counties differently based on existing election infrastructure, state law, staffing capacity and access to resources. Requirements such as rapid implementation of paper ballot systems and recurring voter list verification using multiple federal databases raise serious feasibility concerns, particularly for rural and under resourced jurisdictions.

As written, H.R. 7300 would shift additional administrative responsibilities to county election offices and require timely and costly changes to existing election administration processes. Counties would need sufficient time, significant funding and sustained technical assistance to implement these requirements while maintaining ongoing election operations.

Thank you for your consideration of county perspectives and for your continued leadership and engagement working to ensure and safeguard U.S. elections. We welcome the opportunity to discuss and advance our ideas for safeguarding our nation's elections.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Chase
Executive Director
National Association of Counties

The New York Times https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/05/opinion/trump-elections-nationalizing-voting-citizens.html

GUEST ESSAY

What's Really Driving These Bogus Claims of Voter Fraud

Feb. 5, 2026

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By Stephen Richer
Mr. Richer is a Republican former elected recorder of Maricopa County, Ariz., where he was responsible for voter registration, early voting and mail-in voting.

This week, President Trump called on his party to nationalize American elections, an unconstitutional move that he said would be justified because of the danger of noncitizens casting ballots. "These people were brought to our country to vote, and they vote illegally," he said.

No president has so baldly proposed to intervene in state elections, but the charge that noncitizens are illegally casting ballots is sadly commonplace. Elon Musk claims on X, without evidence, that significant numbers of undocumented immigrants vote. Rudy Giuliani erroneously alleged that my home state, Arizona, had allowed "probably about 250,000" votes from noncitizens in 2020, despite the fact that Arizona has long required proof of citizenship to vote in state elections.

Election officials usually respond to these allegations by pointing out that there are almost no prosecutions of fraudulent noncitizen voters. Reuters has noted that even the pro-Trump Heritage Foundation's database of election crimes listed only 24 instances of noncitizens voting in U.S. elections from 2003 to 2023.

While these rebuttals are correct, they are incomplete: Just because something isn't prosecuted doesn't mean it doesn't happen. Happily, there is new compelling evidence debunking the false claims. Recently, a number of states have undertaken investigations into noncitizen voting, cross-checking voter rolls with citizenship status, and found it virtually nonexistent.

When confronted with allegations of noncitizens voting in Utah, Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson, the state's top election official, initiated a monthslong review of Utah's approximately 2.1 million registered voters. She and her team found one "confirmed noncitizen." Just one. And that one noncitizen, while registered, had never voted.

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Idaho, a state of one million voters, ran similar tests in 2024, and it found 36 "very likely" registered noncitizens. That may seem like a lot until you view it in light of claims that statewide elections are altered by such anomalies. Some but not all of those 36 people previously voted, Idaho's secretary of state, Phil McGrane, said, but "out of the million-plus registered voters we started with, we're down to 10 thousandths of a percent" of the overall count — not even close to affecting the outcome.

Louisiana's investigation in 2025 netted some 390 noncitizen registrants, 79 of whom had voted in at least one election over the past several decades (out of 2.9 million registrants). Just a few weeks ago, Montana found 23 possible noncitizen registrants (out of approximately 785,000 people registered). And Georgia, in some ways the model for these investigations, found in its 2024 audit 20 registered noncitizens (out of 8.2 million registrations). In my four years in office in Maricopa County overseeing voter registration, I came across a total of two possible instances of noncitizens voting (out of some 2.5 million registered voters).

Some politicians are trying to exploit even these small numbers. In Michigan, the Macomb County clerk, Anthony Forlini, who is running for the top election office in the state, the secretary of state, recently announced to great fanfare that he'd found 15 noncitizens on his county's voter rolls of over 724,000 registered voters. The incumbent secretary of state, Jocelyn Benson, then tasked her team with investigating the 15 files. It found that three of the people were U.S. citizens, four were previously removed from voter rolls, four were under further investigation and four seemed to be noncitizens.

These investigations affirm what is simply common sense. People largely aren't willing to risk their status in the United States — the land of economic opportunity — for the ability to cast one more vote out of hundreds of thousands or millions in a state and hundreds of millions in the country.

The investigations also suggest that many politicians and public interest groups, all of which have access to these reports, may not actually care that much about election security. The constant talk of noncitizen voting is more likely about scoring political points and bolstering fund-raising.

Playing politics with the idea of fraudulent voters and stolen elections comes at a real cost to American confidence in our elections. It's an affront to our democracy and to all those who work to deliver free and fair elections. It's also an ominous sign for where things may be heading this year.

For Mr. Trump, the myth of noncitizens voting is part of the broader story he's concocted to avoid accepting that he lost to Joe Biden in 2020. But it also appears to be about this fall's elections. Mr. Trump may well intend to send the F.B.I. to run elections in Fulton County, Ga., or the Department of Homeland Security to seize ballot tabulators from Los Angeles County.

I don't think it's likely he will do so. But I also wouldn't have predicted that the F.B.I. would take hundreds of boxes of 2020 election materials from Fulton County, as it did last week. And I certainly wouldn't have predicted that Republicans would attempt to derail the electoral count on Jan. 6, 2021.

Everyone — Democrats and Republicans — should use the new state-level proof that noncitizen voting is virtually nonexistent to push back against the real danger to our democracy: craven politicians using the issue to undermine our free and fair elections.

Source photograph by Desiree Rios/The New York Times.

Stephen Richer is a former elected recorder of Maricopa County, Ariz., where he oversaw voter registration, early voting and mail voting for the fourth-largest county in the United States. He is now the chief executive of Republic Affairs and a fellow at the Cato Institute.

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A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 18 of the New York edition with the headline: What's Really Driving These Bogus Claims of Voter Fraud

Mr. MORELLE. With that, I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman STEIL. The gentleman yields back.

The gentlewoman from Florida, the vice chair of the Committee, Ms. Lee, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for convening this important hearing.

Thank you to our witnesses for joining us here today.

As Florida's former Secretary of State, promoting voter confidence and election security have been key priorities of mine since coming to Congress. The Committee's Make Elections Great Again Act includes a number of common-sense requirements, including photo ID and election day deadline for receiving ballots and list maintenance standards that a number of you have already touched upon.

These measures are proven effective, they promote security, and they do promote public confidence, all endeavors we should be pursuing in Congress.

Chairwoman Bollin, I would like to return to one of the concepts that you mentioned during your testimony, and it is this: The concept of critical infrastructure.

The Department of Homeland Security designated elections infrastructure as critical infrastructure, and as a consequence for a number of years now has been providing cybersecurity support to State and local elected officials. You touch on this concept as important both to election systems and equipment and also how you view the federalism concerns related to elections.

I would appreciate it if you would elaborate on those concepts.

Ms. BOLLIN. Yes. Thank you very much for the question.

I think it is extremely important. When we relegate these to the States, everybody wants confidence. I am really puzzled by the suggestion that there is not a lot of fraud. Why would we wait for fraud to occur to protect it?

These issues of security, security in the ballots, security in the database system, security in the actual machines that are tabulating, this was a requirement under the Help America Vote Act, as was the electronic qualified voter files. This is a great opportunity to see.

We know we have advanced so far. I mean, the good advances, as well as the cynical advances in the security issues, that it is time for a reset. We should be looking at it right now. The EAC is looking at guidelines, security guidelines, for our equipment. There are concerns about transmission.

We all want timely results. In order to get timely results, we also want them to be accurate. The systems in place that feed into that are extremely important—the accuracies test, the confidence, the transparency, and most importantly, accountability. If there is no accountability, then we will never have fair elections.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Nobile, going back to that concept, we heard testimony earlier about—the Chairman had great questions about the connection between timely election results reporting and voter confidence.

I would like to hear your perspective on that. Also, in your written testimony you go a step further and note that election ballot

deadlines past election day, in your view, even violate Federal law. Tell us about that.

Mr. NOBILE. Yes. It is not just us. The Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit said that. We have been litigating this for 5 years.

When Congress enacted the first election integrity provision in the history of Article II, it enacted election day. In all times election day ended on election day. In the last 15 years, there has been this activist effort to get State legislators to extend ballot receipt deadlines in a way that, frankly, makes elections disorderly and unreliable and suspicious, and it has radically reduced public trust in elections.

For the last 15 years, we have been suffering through 2 weeks of post-election uncertainty because people are not just getting their ballots in time—or returned in time.

Frankly, the denominator of ballots outstanding continues to increase, which, when people go to bed at night, they need to know how many ballots are outstanding, they need to know how many ballots are left to be counted. They do not need to wake up 3 days later and find out there is an additional 150,000 ballots coming in.

It is just, frankly, radically undermining elections.

Ms. LEE. It is. I can tell you in Florida, third-largest State in the country, we know how to do this. We get our ballots in on election day. We have results by 9 o'clock. It can be done, and it absolutely improves voter confidence.

Let me also touch on this. There is a lot of discussion about citizenship in and around today's hearing. Would you elaborate on the other reasons—there are actually a multitude of reasons why somebody may need to be removed from voter registration rolls, everything from death to moving.

Would you elaborate for us on many of the reasons why somebody might need to be removed from a voter roll?

Mr. NOBILE. Yes. You have got to have a clean and accurate voter registration list to keep fraud from happening, right? That is the whole reason why it was created in the 1800's.

Frankly, States, including North Carolina, are not complying with their NVRA obligations. We sued them 4 years ago. We are currently suing California, Oregon, and Illinois.

People need to know that the way you commit fraud and undermine an election is you have a dirty voter registration list. That is step one.

Ms. LEE. Thank you, Mr. Nobile.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentlewoman yields back.

Ms. Sewell is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My questions are for you, Secretary Gray.

Mr. GRAY. Yes.

Ms. SEWELL. I have read with great interest about your Election Integrity Agenda, especially the proof of citizenship law that was passed by the Wyoming State Legislature. You must have had rampant voter fraud to make it necessary to pass such restrictive laws.

My question to you is, what is the number of voter election fraud cases in your State of Wyoming over the, say, last 20 years?

Mr. GRAY. Well, Congresswoman Sewell, it is sort of a circular question. I have seen this a lot from——

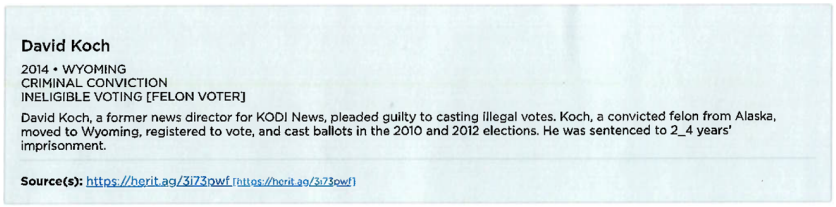
Ms. SEWELL. No, I am going to reclaim my time since I have very limited time.

I am going to let you know that it is only one, only one case. This is not data from some far left think tank. This is data collected from the Heritage Foundation.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record this report by the Heritage Foundation that shows that the State of Wyoming has only had one case of voter fraud.

Chairman STEIL. Without objection.

[The report referred to follows:]



David Koch

2014 • WYOMING
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
INELIGIBLE VOTING [FELON VOTER]

David Koch, a former news director for KODI News, pleaded guilty to casting illegal votes. Koch, a convicted felon from Alaska, moved to Wyoming, registered to vote, and cast ballots in the 2010 and 2012 elections. He was sentenced to 2–4 years' imprisonment.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3i73qwf [https://herit.ag/3i73qwf]

Ms. SEWELL. Secretary Gray, as I am sure you know, President Trump has recently called for the Federal Government to, quote, "take over elections."

You are a State elected official. What branch of Government has the legal right to administer elections? Does the President of the United States have the authority to administer and nationalize elections?

Mr. GRAY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, Congresswoman.

First, I would like to State that I disagree with your previous assertion about only one example.

Ms. SEWELL. Well, the evidence——

Mr. GRAY. I would also——

Ms. SEWELL. Sir, with all due respect, this is my time.

Mr. GRAY. Thank you.

Ms. SEWELL. The evidence speaks for itself. The fact of the matter is, is that it seems to me that we are solving for a problem—we are offering a solution for a problem that does not exist, is what I am saying.

I could answer the question also as to who is in charge of administering elections. Neither the President nor Congress has the right to run elections.

Article I, section 4, clause 1 of the Constitution is very clear: The time, place, and manner of holding elections shall be prescribed in each State by the legislature thereof.

Now, Congress can alter the regulation of elections. However, the President has no legal authority to decide which ballots are counted, and he certainly cannot administer elections himself.

Mr. Chairman, I must say, voting rights used to be wildly bipartisan, and lately it has been so partisan. This Committee should not be involved in the President's scheme to rig this year's midterm election and this disinformation campaign to legitimize lies and myths about rampant voter fraud by noncitizens where we already

have laws on the books that say that noncitizens, it is illegal for them to vote.

Mr. Gray, on January 22, 2026, Secretary Gray, just a couple weeks ago, you put out a press release in your official capacity as Wyoming Secretary of State that announced your top five election integrity priorities, which included eliminating Medicare, Medicaid, and student IDs as acceptable forms of identification for voting. This provision is also in the MEGA bill as well.

What is the problem with using student IDs or IDs, like Federal IDs, like Medicare, Medicaid, and why do we find them so objectionable?

Mr. GRAY. Mr. Chairman, Congresswoman, the issue with many of these IDs is that they do not have photos on them. That is one of the issues. How do you have——

Ms. SEWELL. Sir, with all due respect——

Mr. GRAY [continuing]. how do you have——

Ms. SEWELL [continuing]. with all due respect, with all due respect, we have already established that voter fraud in your State is basically nonexistent. There cannot be any reason for restricting the types of IDs more frequently used by low-income and elderly Americans.

The real reason suggests to me that you are picking the voters who can actually vote and eliminating students or making it harder for students who have reached the age of 18 to vote, to me sounds very discriminatory.

Ms. Bollin, I ask you the same question I asked Secretary Gray. Do you know the number of reported cases of election fraud in the State of Michigan over the last 20 years? I can tell you, since my time is running out. It is 19 cases, 19 out of 64,520,000 ballots cast. That is a rate of 0.0002 percent of fraud.

Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record the Heritage Foundation's election fraud map that shows this point.

Chairman STEIL. Without objection.

[The election fraud map follows:]

Kathy Funk

2023 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
ALTERING THE VOTE COUNT

Kathy Funk, a Democrat Flint Township clerk and Flint County election supervisor, was charged by the state with one count of ballot tampering and one count of misconduct in office, both felonies, in the August 2020 primary in which she was on the ballot and won her election by 79 votes. Funk claimed someone broke into a room at the Flint Township Hall. However, her lawyer stipulated that she broke the seal on a secure ballot canister, which invalidated the ballots so they could not be counted, and no one else was charged with breaking and entering the Hall. Funk pleaded no contest to one count of misconduct in office in exchange for not receiving prison time and having the ballot tampering charge dismissed. She is awaiting sentencing. Her employment with the county was terminated in December 2022.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3IkAgdY [https://herit.ag/3IkAgdY], https://herit.ag/3K6eb4i [https://herit.ag/3K6eb4i]

Nancy Juanita Williams

2023 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
FRAUDULENT USE OF AN ABSENTEE BALLOT, ILLEGAL "ASSISTANCE" AT THE POLLS

Nancy Williams was charged by the state in Wayne County with 3 felony counts of forging a signature on an absentee ballot, 2 felony counts of election law forgery, 5 misdemeanor counts of false statements on applications for absentee ballots, and 7 misdemeanor counts of receiving a payment to influence vote after participating in an absentee ballot trafficking scheme involving elderly voters at a nursing care facility. She submitted voter registration and absentee ballot applications for 26 legally incapacitated residents under her care without their consent. Williams had the absentee ballots mailed directly to her. She pleaded guilty to 7 counts of receiving a payment to influence vote in exchange for dismissal of the other charges, was sentenced to one year of probation, fined $3,500, and assessed $1,096 in fees. Similar charges against Williams in Oakland County are still pending.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3EHTtE1 [https://herit.ag/3EHTtE1], https://herit.ag/3rdIfVE [https://herit.ag/3rdIfVE]

Carless Clark

2022 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
FRAUDULENT USE OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Carless Clark, 59, pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor count of forging a signature on another individual's absentee ballot. In the 2020 general election, Clark signed and returned her grandson's absentee ballot, citing her concern that he would not have enough time to vote in-person on Election Day, which the grandson did. Clark was sentenced to twelve months' probation and nineteen days of community service.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3uFWbEt [https://herit.ag/3uFWbEt], https://herit.ag/3iRCVi4 [https://herit.ag/3iRCVi4]

Trenae Ryesha Rainey

2022 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
FRAUDULENT USE OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Trenae Myesha Rainey, 28, pleaded guilty to three misdemeanor counts of making a false statement on an absentee ballot application. During the 2020 general election, Rainey, an employee at an assisted living facility, completed roughly two dozen absentee voter applications, forging individual signatures of residents. She then handed over the ballots to another employee, whom she instructed to send the absentee ballot requests to the county election clerk. Rainey was sentenced to two years' probation, in which the first 45 days would be spent in the county jail.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3K0oJzc [https://herit.ag/3K0oJzc], https://herit.ag/3DptHCW [https://herit.ag/3DptHCW]

Paul Parana

2021 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
FRAUDULENT USE OF AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

Paul Parana of Canton was charged with impersonating a voter after he forged his daughter's signature on an absentee ballot in 2020 General Election. He pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor election law violation, was sentenced to 90 days' probation, and ordered to pay $1,100 in fines and court costs.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3eXnao7 [https://herit.ag/3eXnao7], https://herit.ag/3rGpyE0 [https://herit.ag/3rGpyE0], https://herit.ag/378DNIU [https://herit.ag/378DNIU]

Brandon Hall

2016 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
BALLOT PETITION FRAUD

Brandon Hall was convicted of ten counts of ballot petition fraud stemming from the 2012 election. Chris Houghtaling, who sought to become a candidate for the Ottawa County District Court, hired Hall to acquire the necessary signatures for his candidacy; Houghtaling reportedly did not care whether the signatures were collected legally or illegally, and even assisted in Hall's crime by providing him old 2010 petitions to copy. Hall, realizing he did not collect enough signatures, used a phone book to complete the rest. Hall's friend, Zachary Savage, assisted with the fraud, but prosecutors granted him immunity in exchange for his testimony. Hall appealed his conviction, which was affirmed. He is awaiting sentencing.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3pDfP36 [https://herit.ag/3pDfP36]

Adam Kane Easlick

2015 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
FALSE REGISTRATIONS

Adam Easlick, a resident in Ypsilanti, voted illegally in the 2012 presidential election in Tuscola County after registering at a post office. He was registered at multiple addresses outside of Ypsilanti. Easlick pleaded guilty to the charges and received six months' probation. Interestingly, following the voter fraud charges, in May 2013, after multiple warnings from the secretary of state, Easlick placed an ad on Craigslist seeking an address in Ingham County to obtain a fraudulent driver's license. Between March 2012 and February 2013, Easlick changed his registration among street addresses, post offices or mail-forwarding businesses in Clare, Hillsdale, Tuscola, and Kent counties.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3f1ZtuQ [https://herit.ag/3f1ZtuQ]

Armani Asad

2014 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
FRAUDULENT USE OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Armani Asad, an unsuccessful candidate for Hamtramck City Council, pleaded guilty to one count of improper possession of an absentee ballot. Asad initially faced 14 charges related to improper return of absentee ballots. He and two other men illegally delivered absentee ballots to the city clerk's office from people not related to them or members of their household. Asad was fined and ordered to pay court costs.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3BglTzu [https://herit.ag/3BglTzu], https://herit.ag/3iWOlQS [https://herit.ag/3iWOlQS]

Edward Pinkney

2014 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
BALLOT PETITION FRAUD

As if once wasn't enough, in 2014 Reverand Edward Pinkney was convicted again. This time for false certification of petitions in a mayoral recall election. As a habitual offender, based on his three prior convictions, Pinkney was sentenced to serve between two-and-a-half and ten years in prison.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3yc3aWc [https://herit.ag/3yc3aWc], https://herit.ag/3rDeIzh [https://herit.ag/3rDeIzh]

Mohammed Abdur Rahman

2014 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
FRAUDULENT USE OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Mohammed Abdur Rahman, of Hamtramck, pleaded guilty to one count of improper possession of an absentee ballot. He initially faced five counts of improper possession of ballots during the 2013 primary election. He was sentenced to probation.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3i30OmZ [https://herit.ag/3i30OmZ]

Russell Mohammed

2014 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
FRAUDULENT USE OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Russell Mohammed pleaded guilty to one felony count of unlawful possession of an absentee ballot. Mohammed was initially charged with six counts of improper return of absentee ballots. He and two other men were charged with delivering absentee ballots to the city clerk's office from people not related to them or members of their household. Mohammed was fined and ordered to pay court costs.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3l3JCQm [https://herit.ag/3l3JCQm], https://herit.ag/2VfyAwg [https://herit.ag/2VfyAwg]

Salim Ahmed

2014 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
FRAUDULENT USE OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Salim Ahmed pleaded guilty to one felony count of unlawful possession of an absentee ballot. Ahmed was initially charged with 20 counts of improper return of absentee ballots. He and two other men delivered absentee ballots to the city clerk's office from people not related to them or members of their household. Ahmed was fined and ordered to pay court costs.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3zKbCMH [https://herit.ag/3zKbCMH], https://herit.ag/3y9dsGN [https://herit.ag/3y9dsGN]

Dilsa Maria Saddler

2013 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
INELIGIBLE VOTING [ALIEN]

Dilsa Maria Saddler, of Berrien Springs, was convicted of conspiracy to commit election fraud. She registered to vote and voted in the 2008 general election, even though she was ineligible because she is not a U.S. citizen. She was sentenced to 10 days in jail, 100 hours of community service, and $750 in fines and court costs.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/3vTcEW7 [https://herit.ag/3vTcEW7]

Don Yowchuang

2012 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
BALLOT PETITION FRAUD

Former staff members for U.S. Representative Thaddeus McCotter created fake nominating petitions for his short-lived 2012 presidential campaign. Lorianne O'Brady pleaded no contest to falsely signing a nominating petition, and was sentenced to 20 days in either prison or a work program, as well as paying $2,625. Don Yowchuang pleaded no contest to 10 counts of forgery and six counts of falsely signing a nominating petition as a circulator, and received three years' probation and 200 hours of community service. Paul Seewald pleaded guilty to nine counts of falsely signing a nominating petition, and received 100 hours of community service and three years' probation.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/2Ww4fdP [https://herit.ag/2Ww4fdP]

Jason Bauer

2012 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
BALLOT PETITION FRAUD

Former Oakland County Democratic Party officials, Jason Bauer and Mike McGuinness, were charged with election fraud for trying to put a fake Tea Party candidate on the ballot in order to dilute the Republican vote. Bauer pleaded no contest and was sentenced to one year probation and $2,600 in fines. McGuinness pleaded no contest to perjury and forgery, and received one year probation, 180 hours of community service, and $1,965 in fines.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/2WqExHw [https://herit.ag/2WqExHw], https://herit.ag/371lUvV [https://herit.ag/371lUvV], https://herit.ag/3eYmKh1 [https://herit.ag/3eYmKh1]

Lorianne O'Brady

2012 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
BALLOT PETITION FRAUD

Former staff members for U.S. Representative Thaddeus McCotter created fake nominating petitions for his short-lived 2012 presidential campaign. Don Yowchuang pleaded no contest to 10 counts of forgery and six counts of falsely signing a nominating petition as a circulator, and received three years' probation and 200 hours of community service.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/2Ww4fdP [https://herit.ag/2Ww4fdP]

Mike McGuinness

2012 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
BALLOT PETITION FRAUD

Former Oakland County Democratic Party officials, Mike McGuinness and Jason Bauer, were charged with election fraud for trying to put a fake Tea Party candidate on the ballot in order to dilute the Republican vote. McGuinness pleaded no contest to perjury and forgery, and received one year probation, 180 hours of community service, and $1,965 in fines.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/2WqExHw [https://herit.ag/2WqExHw], https://herit.ag/371llJvV [https://herit.ag/371llJvV], https://herit.ag/3eYmKh2 [https://herit.ag/3eYmKh2]

Paul Seewald

2012 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
BALLOT PETITION FRAUD

Former staff members for U.S. Representative Thaddeus McCotter created fake nominating petitions for his short-lived 2012 presidential campaign. Paul Seewald pleaded guilty to nine counts of falsely signing a nominating petition, and received 100 hours of community service and three years' probation.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/2Ww4fdP [https://herit.ag/2Ww4fdP]

Edward Pinkney

2007 • MICHIGAN
CRIMINAL CONVICTION
BUYING VOTES,FRAUDULENT USE OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Following a jury trial, Reverand Edward Pinkney of Benton Harbor was found guilty of possessing other individuals' absentee ballots and buying votes in a 2005 runoff election. At a local soup kitchen, Pinkney would pay $5 to each poor or homeless person who would fill out an absentee ballot.

Source(s): https://herit.ag/2Wi17BW [https://herit.ag/2Wi17BW]

Ms. SEWELL. Nobody should be fooled by what is going on here today. The only thing mega about this bill is that it is mega voter suppression. The rate of voter fraud is almost nonexistent relative to the number of ballots cast in each election.

The Republicans' voter suppression agenda is simply designed to appease Trump and to set the stage for a takeover and nationalization of elections.

The Trump agenda is rooted in anti-immigrant conspiracy theories aimed to disenfranchising young people, women, the elderly, people of color.

One in three eligible voters in America do not participate in our elections for a host of reasons, and 25 percent of eligible voters in America are not even registered.

Instead of conducting this charade, I would prefer the time of this Committee to be used trying to make sure that all Americans—all Americans—have the right to access the ballot box and to vote.

With that, sir, I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman STEIL. The gentlewoman yields back.

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Loudermilk, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I am the longest-serving Member on this Committee, and I think it is rich that the other side of the dais up here is talking about a Federal takeover of elections when I sat in this Committee just a few years ago with a bill called H.R. 1 that Speaker Nancy Pelosi pushed forward.

It was a 600-page bill that was a total Federal unconstitutional takeover of elections. It included provisions that were not just challenging to impose on the States, but impossible to impose on the States.

When we are discussing a way of making our election systems with more integrity, I find it disingenuous to hear that this is a Federal takeover by those that have authored one of the greatest and most exclusive Federal takeover election bills ever.

From the looks of folks at the table and in the audience, I think you all remember H.R. 1. It also included the Federal Government helping pay for campaigns.

It was quite an interesting time that we are here. I just find it is even that much more interesting now that the folks who authored the greatest Federal takeover of elections are complaining about wanting somebody to prove their citizenship before they vote.

With that, Secretary Gray, there have been a lot of critics of election security efforts in general who claim Congress is requiring States to engage in expensive changes to their election system.

Have you experienced that it was very expensive for the State of Wyoming to implement its requirement for documenting proof of United States citizenship for registering to vote?

Mr. GRAY. Congressman, Mr. Chairman, it was seamless, low cost, no cost, and I have not seen any costs yet other than revising training materials. It has just been a seamless approach in implementing these Federal statutes.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. What about the provisions within this bill? Do you anticipate that that would create a lot of expense, to implement what is in here in the State of Wyoming?

Mr. GRAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman—Congressman.

Not anticipating really any expense.

The Federal Government has a role to play in setting these baseline standards. I mean, countering a little bit the testimony from a Democratic Congresswoman previously, I mean, if you look at NVRA, HAVA, the Civil Rights Act, these are all bills that were supported by the Democrat Party that set baseline standards for elections. That is what the MEGA Act and the SAVE Act is doing.

It is really incredible, some of these claims that are being—that are being made by the Democrat Party.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Well, I appreciate that.

You know, it seems like we have entered into an era of politics to where it really does not matter what the core principles are as long as you can hang your political opponent with it. That is all that really matters these days.

One last question for you. Would having a uniform procedure such as in this bill and security standards make it less expensive for States to run Federal elections?

Mr. GRAY. Mr. Chairman—Congressman, I think having a uniform standard really clarifies things. I think it is going to be very low cost or no cost. I mean, really, it is just revising training materials. That is the big—that is it. There is really no cost attached to that.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Well, thank you for that.

Representative Bollin, real quickly in the remainder of my time, thank you for being here. When I was a State representative, I had the opportunity to come and speak before Congress, and so we appreciate your time.

The Department of Justice recently asked for Michigan to turn over portions of their centralized voter list in order to verify whether or not Michigan is compliant with the voter list maintenance procedures required by the National Voter Registration Act.

In response, Secretary Benson wrote, "The law does not support this assertion. The collection, use, and dissemination of private information should be for a necessary and lawful purpose."

My question is, is protecting the integrity of voter rolls a necessary and lawful purpose, in your opinion?

Ms. BOLLIN. Well, protecting the voter rolls—I would say, protecting elections and the voters is more important.

We do know that our Secretary of State has a history of making up her own laws. While she is the Secretary of State, she is not a legislator, and I think that that is a reminder of that.

I would say that we need to make sure that we are not making these dictates. There have been these interpretations by Benson, inclusive of Benson, over the years that really aggravated the situation, and, I would say, it led to a lot of the disruption in the 2020 election.

Our Secretary of State has really—we had to subpoena her by our Oversight Committee—continues to refuse practical things—a manual for election administrators—under the guise that it is to

protect the voters. No, I think we all need to know and understand the standards of training for our election workers.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you for your time.

I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentleman yields back.

The Representative from California, Mrs. Torres, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you, Chairman.

Welcome, to our witnesses.

It is shocking. What is happening in our country is not normal. This administration seems hell-bent on blocking certain voters from casting their ballot, changing the rules of elections so outrageously to purposely block millions of Americans who have been demonstrating against Republican policies.

President Trump said he wants to Federalize elections, and we need to ask, what does that actually mean? Are we talking about military, with machine guns, at our local school election stations? Or masked, untrained, heavily armed ICE agents surrounding our community centers? What are we talking about here?

The FBI just raided a local election office, with the Director of National Intelligence tagging along like an obedient dog, allegedly in pursuit of a fever-dream conspiracy theory about the 2020 elections that no sane person believes.

Reportedly, the administration forced out the FBI special agent in charge when he questioned this investigation, and after his removal, the head of national intelligence put the local FBI field agents on a direct call with the President.

I have been told that Fulton County now has no way—no way—to verify if the FBI or anyone else has altered any of those ballots.

The Republican election bills being considered are a direct attack on dissent of current Republican policies on married women, women who build careers, led companies, serve in Congress, and, yes, women like me who got married and changed their names; on young voters and seniors who cannot afford to purchase a passport.

Instead of focusing on affordable childcare and quality maternal health, these bills will make tens of thousands of American women struggle, needlessly, to vote.

This is about control. It is about silencing people who do not agree with Republican policies and about blocking women from the ballot. We will not be silenced.

Chairman Steil, I truly enjoyed touring my local election office with you just 2 years ago and was delighted with your statement that "it was an amazing experience to walk through L.A. Central Count," which counted more ballots than 38 States in the 2024 general election.

I ask for unanimous consent to enter into the record testimony from my local L.A. County elections official.

Chairman STEIL. Without objection.

Mrs. TORRES. Thank you.

[The election official testimony follows:]

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

DEAN C. LOGAN
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

United States House of Representatives
Committee on House Administration

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

SUPPLEMENTAL TESTIMONY: "Make Elections Great Again" Hearing

Dean C. Logan
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
Los Angeles County

Good morning, Chair Steil and Members of the Committee. I am Dean Logan, the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk ("RR/CC") for Los Angeles County ("County") in the State of California ("State"). In this capacity, I am responsible for the County's voter registration process, voter file maintenance, federal, state, local and special election administration, and other related programs. The Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk is one of 58 county election officials in California responsible for administering elections and certifying election results.

Los Angeles County has nearly 5.8 million registered voters, with 5,000 voting precincts established for countywide elections. As the largest and most complex electoral jurisdiction in the country, with 88 cities, over 100 school and community college districts, 55 general and special districts, and approximately 140 unincorporated areas, we submit this testimony to provide important background and context as the committee deliberates these important matters.

During the April 20, 2025, House Administration Committee hearing, the Chair focused on the fact that over 16 million of the votes cast in 2024, were from the state of California. Framed another way, over 1 in 10 votes cast in the entire nation come from California. The sheer number of votes cast in California, and in particular in Los Angeles, the largest jurisdiction, requires particular attention be paid to ensure that we have laws that protect voter intent, ensure ballot access, enhance voter trust in the outcomes, and avoid voter confusion.

In Los Angeles County, we counted over 3.7 million ballots in the 2024 General Election. To put that into perspective, Los Angeles County counted more ballots than 38 other states, including the great states of Arizona, Colorado, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin. This volume, reflective of our population, geography, and diversity, necessitates that we need to offer multiple voting options to give voters the opportunity to vote on or before Election Day, and to allow for prudent contingency in response to conditions or activities that would otherwise disrupt the electoral process. The simple truth is that a lot of Americans live in California, a lot of Americans vote in California, and it takes time to count millions of votes accurately and transparently while maintaining chain of custody and complying with local, state, and federal voting laws.

1. **H.R. 7300's abolition of "universal vote by mail" would prohibit Los Angeles County from mailing every voter a printed paper ballot that can be marked manually. H.R. 7300 would take away voting options used by voters in rural areas, who are home-bound, or do not have means of transportation to vote in-person while significantly increasing wait times at vote centers.**

As a state, California has led the nation in adopting standards for voter verifiable paper ballots to be used in all elections. This standard gives voters confidence that their vote cannot be tampered with by cyber criminals or political operatives. Each voter can trust the paper ballot they marked to reflect their choices. In Los Angeles County, each voter has the choice to return their ballot in person, by mail, or in secure drop boxes with chain of custody protections that ensure ballots are received, transported and counted as the voter intended. The paper ballot also enables each county to be able to conduct audits, and recounts, if necessary, after the election.

H.R. 7300 requires that a voter verifiable paper ballot be provided. Los Angeles County currently offers every voter the option of marking a paper ballot manually through a ballot delivered to each voter's mailing address. A voter may alternatively choose to vote in person at a vote center, independently marking and verifying a paper, human-readable ballot using a non-tabulating ballot marking device.

H.R. 7300's abolition of what is labeled "universal vote by mail" contradicts the bill's provisions requiring that each voter have the option to vote by manually marking a printed ballot that includes all relevant contests and candidates. Given the number of people, the long distances, and the complexity of ballots, California ensures every registered voter receives a paper ballot by requiring county election officials to mail ballots to all registered voters. H.R. 7300 would ban election officials from automatically delivering a paper ballot to every voter by mail.

Further, H.R. 7300 would require the voter to have the option at every in-person voting location to manually mark a pre-printed ballot that includes all relevant contests and candidates. Currently, every vote center in Los Angeles County is equipped to allow any eligible voter, regardless of where they live in the county, to be able to view and mark their own ballot with the contests and measures specific to where they live. In any particular election, there will be several hundred ballot styles, reflecting different combinations of local contests and measures based on a person's residence. To provide voters who choose to vote in person with a voter-verifiable paper ballot, voters use the ballot marking device to display the correct ballot style in the language they wish to see the ballot. After the voter marks their voting choices, the ballot marking device prints out the official paper ballot with the voter's choices for verification prior to submission. H.R. 7300 would require the printing, distribution, and storage of millions of blank copies of hundreds of ballot styles, in each of the languages mandated by federal law, at every one of over 650 vote centers in Los Angeles County. Alternatively, it would require the purchase and/or re-design of our entire voting system, costing hundreds of millions of dollars.

2. **Banning states from accepting ballots that have been cast by Election Day, but arrive later, would have disenfranchised 75,000 Los Angeles County voters in November 2024.**

H.R. 7300 would cut off receipt of ballots on Election Day, affecting not only California voters, but also voters in 17 states, including Alaska, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia. In many places, voting by mail is the only way to get ballots out to and back from voters who live in remote or rural locations.

Based on our experience in the 2024 General Election, most of the 75,000 ballots postmarked on or before Election Day and received within seven days of the election as currently permitted under state law would be disqualified. It is important to note that the 75,000 ballots reflect voters of all ages,

geographic location, and party registration. The cutting of mail services by the United States Postal Service (USPS) has resulted in some ballots that were postmarked and mailed back to our office well in advance of Election Day arriving after Election Day, particularly voters in more remote or rural parts of the county. This represents another contingency provision that ensures voters their ballot will be counted despite changes or disruption in USPS services or delayed mail delivery. Its elimination would introduce additional risk of disenfranchisement and loss of voter participation.

While some members of Congress have raised questions about the state's laws governing how ballots can be received, alleging that it is prone to delays in tabulation, and ultimately the calling of races. The truth is that providing a ballot to voters through the mail is not a source of delay. Most voters receive their ballots a month before election day, which gives them time to learn about and make decisions on which candidates and measures they want to support.

The challenge is how they return the ballots. The ongoing cuts in USPS operations have led to increased delivery delays and new concerns about delays in the affixation of postmarks. Eighteen states, including California, allow ballots that have been postmarked by Election Day to be received within a specified time period to ensure that we are not denying Americans their right to vote simply because of the quality of their mail service or their access to transportation. H.R. 7300 would forbid states from protecting voters' ability to ensure their timely ballot is counted.

3. **H.R. 7300's prohibition of voter registration without presentation of documentary proof of citizenship, the last four digits of an applicant's Social Security number, and documentary proof of state residency would disenfranchise tens of thousands of U.S. Citizens and require the creation of a massive new bureaucracy at the local level without any identified funding.**

H.R. 7300 would require eligible voters to provide documentary proof of citizenship (DPOC) at the time of registration. Voter registration under this bill must be completed, in most instances, at least 30 days before a federal election with no provision for same-day or conditional election-day registration. This could disenfranchise first-time voters, students, young voters, voters experiencing homelessness, and new citizens. Many naturalized U.S. citizens do not possess physical documents that explicitly show citizenship status, and college students typically register to vote and vote on election day, making this requirement yet another barrier to full civic participation.

In states like Kansas which have tried to implement requirements for documentary proof of citizenship, federal courts found a constitutionally violative level of voter disenfranchisement. In Kansas, over 30,000 U.S. citizens, otherwise eligible to vote, were blocked from registering to vote because of Kansas' documentation requirements, resulting in a court order that suspended the law as unconstitutional. Applying Kansas' rate of denial - 12% of new registrants unconstitutionally disenfranchised, H.R. 7300 could result in over 40,000 U.S. citizens being blocked from registering to vote in Los Angeles County in any given year.

H.R. 7300 further seeks to amend Section 202(b) of the REAL ID Act of 2005 to require U.S. citizenship be clearly shown on any state driver's license or identification card issued. According to the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), as of May 2025, REAL ID cardholders are about 58% (19,000,000+) of the eligible population. Hiring and training DMV staff to verify DPOC and replacing over nineteen million REAL ID cards would result in significant disruptions and steep costs.

To integrate requirements for DPOC into the County's election management system, Los Angeles County would have to determine what document or combination of documents are acceptable and responsive to multiple user scenarios (naturalized citizens; U.S.-born citizens; people who have to

change their names, have moved, want to change their party preference, or register their language need). This would involve the need to design and change workflows, database schema and user interfaces to build a new process that can receive and retain new data including potentially the type of DPOC provided, the identifying number, the date of document(s) issuance and expiration, and an image of the document(s). Los Angeles County also anticipates the need to engage county resources and contractors to write or re-write code, test, and deploy new fields to record the DPOC information in the election management system. In addition to designing, testing and purchasing new equipment (scanners or other image capture devices) to collect images of DPOC, Los Angeles County would need to create public-facing forms, instructions, and educational materials, each translated into each of the languages mandated by federal and state laws.

A massive bureaucracy would need to be created to manage the increased document requirements of registrants, the employment of legal experts to research immigration and citizenship laws to create standards for acceptable documentation and apply the exceptions created by H.R. 7300, the training of staff to understand what documents or combination of documents are permitted to establish DPOC, the review and scanning of DPOC documents accompanying each voter's registration. To be able to handle the additional paperwork and ameliorate the inevitable explosion of wait times for the thousands of new applicants that seek to register to vote each year, Los Angeles County estimates needing to hire and train hundreds of new permanent and temporary workers and expand physical capacity.

H.R. 7300, section 303A, subsection (d)(2), is vague and unclear on what process should be used for voters registering online, potentially requiring the state or county to create a supplementary process to receive DPOC for these registrants, which would entail additionally establishing a system for matching the information collected from online registrations with subsequently submitted documents. Whether supplemental DPOC could be submitted as copies online or by mail, or would need to be submitted in-person, these new processes would require building new infrastructure and hiring and training new staff to receive and match the documents with registration.

In total, RR/CC preliminarily estimates associated costs in the tens of millions of dollars and no funding is allocated in the legislation.

4. **H.R. 7300's requirement of government issued photo identification to vote effectively limits voter's access to the ballot.**

H.R. 7300 requires voters to present an approved government-issued photo ID to vote a regular ballot. While the bill lists several valid forms of photo identification, identification cards provided by an educational institution are explicitly prohibited. This creates barriers for participation and disenfranchises student voters, for many of whom the only form of ID they have is the ID issued by their school.

Additionally, this bill requires eligible voters who are unable to provide a valid photo ID to vote provisionally and provide the approved documentation within 3 days for their vote to count. Many voters may not have immediate access to the required documents as some forms of approved ID's (e.g., passports) are difficult to obtain due to financial barriers or other limitations.

H.R. 7300 requires vote by mail ballots to be accompanied by either a copy of a valid photo ID, or the last four digits of the voter's social security number (SSN) plus a state affidavit stating the voter could not get a copy of a photo ID despite reasonable effort. The bill also requires state agencies or local government officials to provide digital photo imaging devices for free to any individual - equipment and services that appear to be an unfunded federal mandate. (Sec. 303A, subsection (b)).

Conclusion

California has established a strong foundation to support free and fair elections, to encourage and facilitate voter registration and participation, and to support a voter centered approach to when, where, and how elections are administered. The mechanics of when, where, and how elections are conducted should never be driven by political directive. These critical processes must be guided by deliberate, thoughtful legislation focused on ensuring eligible voters clearly understand their voting options and can exercise those options without unnecessary barriers.

Change of the magnitude proposed by H.R. 7300 requires multiple years of planning and careful execution. Attempting to implement multiple processes integral to the voter experience – from the documents required for registration and voting, to how and when ballots can be delivered and returned, to how voter files should be maintained – on an accelerated timeframe would create significant risk of administrative error and under-resourcing other critical elements of election administration and security.

More importantly, there is a significant likelihood of a drop in eligible voter participation, higher registration data error rates, and additional costs to taxpayers.

We urge Congress to engage in bi-partisan deliberation with the full input of election administrators, voting rights groups, and experts to craft election changes that achieve the ultimate goals of voter trust and participation.

# # #

Mrs. TORRES. I had doubts about—you had doubts about California elections and went to the source, and I admired you for that.

To address those very doubts, you brought Fox News, held a press briefing, but refused to allow Democrats to join. Why? Maybe because you found nothing out of order. You saw, instead, hard-working public servants working under the eye of streaming video cameras available for anyone in Los Angeles County or across the county——

Chairman STEIL. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. TORRES [continuing]. to view.

We are looking for legislation to fix a problem you failed to find. Not a single Committee Republican or political observer contested the outcome of any House race in 2024 or provided any evidence that California suffered from fraud irregularities.

Why is that? Because California's election infrastructure is sound. We invest in secure systems, rigorous training, and transparency at every level. California has worked hard to ensure that every eligible American voter can cast their ballot.

Yes, election day ends at 8 p.m. on election day. As frustrating as it may be to make sure that every vote is counted, our fantastic State and local election workers make sure that it happens, in a secure and transparent way.

Let us be honest: Actions taken to turn our entire election system upside-down have one goal. Instead, this is the effort that is similar like Pizzagate 2.0, where an ill-informed citizen drove across the country to find sexually abused children. "Look other there!" Meanwhile, we keep the Epstein files secret.

I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentlewoman yields back.

The gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Griffith, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

I agree with my colleagues; all American citizens should have the right to vote. I do, however, disagree that the desire to have all Americans being able to vote has been bipartisan in the past.

Having been a child during the Jim Crow era, I can assure you that the Make Elections Great Again bill is not Jim Crow. Let us talk about Jim Crow in Virginia.

In 1902, the Virginia Constitution was rewritten by Democrats. They did not take it to the people to vote on it; they just did it, assembled in Richmond. The concept was, everybody will recall, to disenfranchise African-Americans.

What people do not recall is, it was also to disenfranchise poor, White, Republican voters in the western part of the State, the very part of the State that I now have the great pleasure and proud to represent. It was done to take them out of the voting rolls, too. Because the Republican populist coalition was challenging the dominant Democrats in the State, and the Democrat Party did that, led by E. Carter Glass of Lynchburg, Virginia.

It would take some time to break that coalition up, and you know what it was, Mr. Chairman? It was the Federal Government interfering, according to all the Democrat politicians of the time, interfering in the States and telling them you cannot continue to run your elections with poll taxes; with complex, subjective registration

processes; and having, quote/unquote, an "understanding clause," making sure that people understood what was going on in the election, that broke that up in the mid–1960's.

Guess what followed that? The election of the first Republican Governor since Reconstruction in 1969.

I participated in that election, not as a voter but as somebody working out there in the hustings. Yes, I was a weird kid. I remember the debate between the Mountain Valley Republicans and the Democrats who controlled everything and who did not want Blacks and poor Whites from the western part of the State actively participating.

I assure you, Mr. Chairman, your bill is not Jim Crow.

I have to tell you, it was an interesting time to live in, and I am glad it has passed. What we want to do is to make sure American citizens can vote.

Mr. Nobile, from your experience as an attorney, do you believe that our current penalties for election fraud sufficiently deter bad actors?

Mr. NOBILE. No.

You know, fraud has been going on for 200 years in American elections. I submitted in my record two written books, one by the former Chairman of this Committee that documented countless frauds in the 19th century, another book that documented countless frauds in the 20th century.

When you look at fraud, you cannot look at it in the terms of last week or last year or 2 years. I mean, it is a competition; people are cheating.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Yes. You are saying we should enhance the law?

Mr. NOBILE. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFITH. You think that the Make Elections Great Again will help us do that?

Mr. NOBILE. Yes.

Mr. GRIFFITH. I do too.

Mr. Nobile, in your experience, what have been some of your concerns raised with the practice of allowing third-party operatives to collect and submit ballots to polling centers—i.e., ballot harvesting?

Mr. NOBILE. Well, that is why we invented the Australian ballot, so people would not be harassed and so they would not monitor people's votes. People could go in and vote privately in a secure location where they would not be harassed.

This sort of advent of all-mail balloting and ballot-chasing programs or ballot-harvesting programs basically return us to the bad days of old, in the 19th century, where poor Whites and the few minorities that were allowed to vote were chased and harassed so they could watch their votes.

We invented the Australian ballot so people would stop getting paid to vote, right? That brought a lot of the protections we enjoy right now——

Mr. GRIFFITH. In my district, that was not just paying them with cash. Sometimes it would be a bottle of whiskey.

Mr. NOBILE. Or a club against the head.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Yes. Yep.

You believe the Make Elections Great Again Act will prohibit ballot harvesting nationwide?

Mr. NOBILE. Yes, it will be a great improvement.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Do you think that makes our system cleaner and more open for American citizens, including African-Americans and poor Whites in the mountains of Virginia?

Mr. NOBILE. Yes. People should be allowed to vote in secure locations away from all the harassment that they might get at home.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentleman yields back.

The Representative from Texas, Ms. Johnson, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, our Constitution envisions a Nation united by the belief that every citizen has the right to participate in our democracy and elect the leaders who govern us, no matter our differences. We must respect the fundamental constitutional right of every citizen to cast a ballot.

That is every citizen that may not have a birth certificate. That is every citizen that may not have a passport. That is every married woman that has changed their name. That is every citizen that lives in a large county where their election office is not open past 4 o'clock, and they work all day, to go register. That is every citizen.

The problem with this bill is, you put all of these administrative hurdles in place to keep citizens from voting, to keep citizens from being able to register to vote.

We have counties where you have one county office in a rural county of 300 miles. When you are working all day, how are you possibly going to go over there in person and provide all of this documentation?

In Dallas, Texas, we have 4 million people—1 election office where you can go to register to vote in person between 9 and 4. When you are a teacher, when you are working a shift, how the hell are you going to get there to do this in person?

When you were born at home and you do not have access to your birth certificate and those records do not exist anymore, you are a United States citizen, and you are not going to be allowed to vote.

When you do not have a $150 and you cannot wait 6 months to get a passport, then you do not get to vote. You are an American citizen, and your country and your Government is denying you the right to vote under this bill.

It is un-American, it is unconstitutional, and it is dead-ass wrong.

Because the problem is, there are a lot of things that we can do to ensure election integrity. If we really are concerned about people having the right to vote, why cannot we submit documents online? Why cannot you register online and submit a copy of whatever documentation you have? Why——

Voice.

[Off-mike.]

Ms. JOHNSON. Not under this, you cannot, no, ma'am. You have to do this in person.

If we are really committed to making sure that people have the right to vote, then we need to open this up; we need to have an

online national registration to vote. Why not? No, you have to do this.

Then the other thing is, I am really, really just personally very troubled, Mr. Chairman, over this notion of women having to submit an affidavit at the poll. Does this mean that we are going to have notary publics at every polling site? Does this mean—what does this mean? That if your married name does not match your birth certificate, then you have to sign an affidavit. Well, how does one do that?

You know, as a lawyer, when you sign an affidavit, it is under oath, sworn to by a notary public. Does this mean now that we are going to make and require every election judge administrator and all of the millions of election sites across this country be notaries?

Are we going to make people pay—most notaries charge. Are we going to make people pay $10 or $15 to go get their affidavit signed to bring to the poll? That is a poll tax. That is not OK. That is unconstitutional.

Passports cost $150. Are we going to require people to pay $150 to get a passport now to be able to vote, or are we going to waive that fee if you want to get a passport to vote so that you do not have an unethical, illegal poll tax?

There is a lot wrong with this bill, Mr. Chairman, because you are putting so many roadblocks, so many obstacles in place that do not protect security, but what it is is denying citizens their constitutional right to vote, which should be our number-one, paramount concern of this Committee, is, how do we make sure that we do not disenfranchise millions of voters in this country? This bill does just that.

Ms. Bell, what would it be like if election judges across this country all of a sudden had to be arbitrators of whether or not a person is a U.S. citizen and that they have to, sort of, now interpret documents? What does that look like in the administration of our elections?

Ms. BRINSON BELL. Well, in implementing it in North Carolina—and I appreciate that it may not have been as much of a lift in Wyoming, but that is one of the things that I think is coming out from this hearing, is that there are differences in administering elections. We had to go through extensive training to train the 25,000 workers in North Carolina's polling places——

Ms. JOHNSON. Right. That is 25,000 just in North Carolina. Imagine——

Ms. BRINSON BELL. Just in North Carolina.

Ms. JOHNSON [continuing]. the State of Texas.

Ms. BRINSON BELL. Yes. That does not include the day-to-day workers in the 100 county offices.

Ms. JOHNSON. Right.

Ms. BRINSON BELL. So——

Ms. JOHNSON. Unfortunately, I am out of time. We really need more time on issues like this, because this is a significant bill.

I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentlewoman yields back.

The Representative from Oklahoma, Mrs. Bice, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you for our witnesses being here today.

First, I want to address Ms. Brinson Bell.

In your testimony, you mentioned that there was no funding tied to this legislation. I think it is important to clarify that this Committee is an authorizing committee; we are not an appropriations committee.

As someone that sits on both an authorizing committee and an appropriations committee, I am glad that there is no funding in here, because that should be an authorization—or, an Appropriations Committee jurisdiction. As someone who sits on that Committee, I am committed to finding ways to help continue to provide funding, and I have legislation I am currently working on to do that very thing.

You know, we have heard my Democrat colleagues talk about the—that Republicans want to Federalize elections. I think it is important to remind my colleagues of a bill that was put forward in 2021, the For the People Act.

I want to read a couple of things that the For the People Act did that I think would be interesting to those that are listening to this hearing today: Automatic voter registration, same-day registration, a ban on voter purges in rolls. It sounds to me like this is Federal regulation of elections.

My colleagues, including the Ranking Member and the two Members sitting next to him, voted "aye" on this legislation. I think it is disingenuous to say that Republicans are looking at Federalizing elections when my colleagues on the other side of the aisle were very much in favor of doing something on election integrity back in 2021.

Ms. Bollin, I want to start with you.

The Department of Justice asked for Michigan to turn over portions of their centralized voter list in order to verify whether or not Michigan was compliant with voter list maintenance rules.

In response, Secretary Jocelyn Benson, who has testified in front of this Committee, wrote, "The law does not support this assertion. The collection, use, and dissemination of private information should be for necessary and lawful purposes."

Ms. Bollin, is protecting the integrity of voter rolls a necessary and lawful purpose?

Ms. BOLLIN. Protecting the voter rolls—I think protecting the voters is. Protecting the voter rolls under the definition by Benson is absolutely not protecting it at all.

Mrs. BICE. In a recent——

Ms. BOLLIN. It should be turned over.

Mrs. BICE. In a recent video, Secretary Benson says, "States can and must hold the line," in defiance of the DOJ's attempt to enforce Federal election law.

Do you believe Michigan should defy the Department's efforts to instill integrity in Michigan's voter laws?

Ms. BOLLIN. Absolutely not.

Mrs. BICE. Mr. Nobile, I would like to throw this over to you. Can you talk a little bit about what is happening in Michigan and why you think it is so important for to us make sure that these voter integrity laws are held.

Mr. NOBILE. Yes. I mean, the Department of Justice's ability to get those records for, frankly, 30 years has been unquestioned, right? I mean, when we enforce it at DOJ, the DOJ gets it. It is Section 8(i) of the NVRA.

You know, Michigan has, you know, inaccurate voter registration lists. There are certain quirks about Michigan that makes it difficult to enforce it there that I cannot go through here, but they have very outdated lists. It is one of several States that do all over the country.

I mean, you know, I talked in my testimony about California and other places, so I will not go through that here. I mean, you know, 21 counties in California removed 11 voters for change of address. I mean, that is not even—it is tough to even take that seriously.

You can extrapolate from that onto Michigan, which is even more defiant than California sometimes. You know, its rolls are very inaccurate, I suspect.

Mrs. BICE. I think, on that note, when I first got to Congress—I come from the State of Oklahoma, where we have very stringent voter ID laws which were passed by the citizens of Oklahoma back in the 1990's. We also have very district mail-in ballot laws. We are required to have it notarized.

In my State in 2020, a lawsuit was filed to actually throw out that notary requirement. Fortunately, as a former legislator, I was part of the process by which we were actually able to confirm that you had to have some sort of photo ID along with the ballot.

This universal mail-in ballot sort of initiative that we have seen in some States is rife with fraud.

When I got to Congress, I had no idea what "curing a ballot" meant. I had never seen a ballot box until I got to Washington, D.C. These are ways that we are using the system for fraud, and I hope that we will address some of these concerns in this legislation and legislation moving forward.

With that, Mr. Chair, I yield the balance of my time.

Chairman STEIL. The gentlewoman yields back.

The Representative from Ohio, Mr. Carey, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CAREY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I might be biased, but, under the leadership of Secretary LaRose, Ohio runs its elections better than any other State in the country. Our State's comprehensive approach prevents fraud, minimizes costs, and upholds the legitimacy of our elections.

By embracing new technologies, rigorous oversight, and commonsense policies, Ohio, in fact, has set itself apart. For example, in our State, we have implemented basic requirements to prove you are a U.S. citizen, a resident of the State, of legal voting age, and more.

We have shown we can have transparent and trustworthy elections and deliver those results quickly. I think our process, honestly, can be the model nationwide, and I invite my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to embrace our approach in the Buckeye State.

While I could go on and on about Ohio—and if you come to my office, I probably will—I want to highlight some of the winning policies.

I am going to go to you quickly, Mr. Gray. You have championed the Wyoming voter ID requirements, as highlighted before. I am going to ask you—and I understand your legislative process is a lot different—what were some of the hurdles that you faced while you were trying to implement that law?

Say it rather quickly, because I have a bunch of questions.

Mr. GRAY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman—Congressman.

I think one of the challenges is debunking a lot of the sort of straw-man arguments that get put out there. We are seeing that on proof of citizenship for registering to vote and these other election integrity reforms. It took us 4 years to get that through, but eventually I think people saw the light.

I think the 2020 election brought out a lot of these deficiencies that States have in their codes. One of them was that we did not have a voter ID law. We needed to get that done, and we got it done in 2021.

Mr. CAREY. Your legislative process, what, does it meet once every 2 years? Or how does that work in Wyoming?

Mr. GRAY. Yes, it is once every year. General session in the odd years, budget session in the even years.

Mr. CAREY. I did learn something from your testimony, as an Ohioan. I did not realized you were referred to as "Wyomingites"——

Mr. GRAY. Yes.

Mr. CAREY [continuing]. so that is one thing I did learn.

Mr. Nobile, Judicial Watch has filed lawsuits to compel voter list maintenance, including the removal of eligible voters.

Under our bill, the Make Elections Great Again, or H.R. 7300—which I am an original co-sponsor—updates voter list maintenance requirements nationwide, including by allowing removal if a registrant is discovered to be a non-citizen.

How does this change-of-address issue—have you seen or argued about in court?

Mr. NOBILE. Thank you for the question.

The current NVRA has very limited removal options. We can do it for change of address, death, and a few others, but those are the two big ones. There have been restrictions on the ability to remove people directly for citizenship. If you recall, in 2024, before the election, there was a big debate that the Supreme Court resolved in Virginia right before election day.

You know, the MEGA Act takes list maintenance from a periodic, you know, reasonable-effort requirement to a more specific requirement. It is, frankly, not all that different than what the Congress did in response to the UOCAVA Act in 2009, if you recall. 2008, military votes needed to go out within a reasonable time, and there were a lot of problems that happened in the 2008 election. Then in 2009, in response to those problems, Congress set a hard deadline for UOCAVA ballots to go out in the MOVE Act.

With this amendment that is being proposed for the MEGA Act, you make those changes.

Mr. CAREY. Well, then, I have more questions, but, bottom line, it is beneficial to have a uniform, baseline standard for voter list maintenance requirements.

I would like to point out a couple things, because with all the pomp and circumstance and all of the things my dear colleagues have said, I went ahead and—I do read The New York Times. Some on our side do. I just wanted to read a quote from there.

As we, as legislators, discuss, Article 1, section 4—this is coming from The New York Times, so it is, you know, pretty factual, according to my colleagues. Article 1, section 4 of the Constitution states that States set the time and places and manner of elections. It also grants Congress the power to make laws about elections.

That is what we are talking about today, folks. That is all we are talking about.

To my dear colleagues, some of the other things that I have—and give me just one more second. Some of the letters that have been put in for the record against this legislation—all I ask, the old phrase, "Judge them not by their words but by their deeds." Look at the funding of a lot of the groups that are saying to not support this legislation.

With that, I am happy to be an original co-sponsor, and, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentleman yields back.

The Representative from Illinois, Mrs. Miller, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MILLER. Thank you, Chairman, for holding this hearing today.

Thank you to our witnesses for being here.

House Republicans are leading the charge to restore faith and trust in our elections. Election integrity should be a nonpartisan issue, but, sadly, House Democrats have made it clear they have no interest in restoring confidence and ensuring security in our elections.

As ABC noted this past weekend, 83 percent of adults support requiring a photo ID to vote, as do 73 percent of Democrat voters. Yet Democrat-elected officials oppose voter ID at every turn, and 14 blue-leaning States, including Illinois, have refused to implement this common-sense measure.

The House will be voting on an expanded version of the SAVE Act this week, and House Administration Republicans, led by Chairman Steil, have introduced the MEGA Act, which builds on the SAVE Act, with additional critical reforms.

Mr. Nobile, first, I want to acknowledge and thank you and my Illinois colleague, Congressman Mike Bost, for fighting to secure the right of candidates to challenge State election laws in Federal Government. As you know, Illinois insists on the controversial practice of counting ballots received after election day, and I am glad that Congressman Bost's challenge to that policy is moving forward on its merits.

In regards to a related case, how does Watson v. RNC, currently before the Supreme Court, affect congressional efforts to ensure that ballots are received no later than election day?

Mr. NOBILE. You know, there has been some, I guess—the Supreme Court will settle the issue under current law if we prevail. Congress can obviously make new law and be more explicit in what it requires if it acts now.

This question, which arose in Bost first and now is in Watson, is, what is the original public meaning of the 1845 statutes as to, what is election day?

Mrs. MILLER. Well, we are going to look forward to that.

When it comes to voter roll maintenance, how do we ensure that States comply with the requirements set by the MEGA Act when many are already non-compliant with the current NVRA statutes?

Mr. NOBILE. Well, I think forced disclosures, which we try to do at Judicial Watch, and then, frankly, just follow up with suits. I mean, we are—there is fertile ground and opportunity for us to sue over. Frankly, we should not have to come to that, but obviously lawsuits help.

You know, when we find a jurisdiction in violation, it is usually not a close case. I mean, they are not sending out confirmation notices, they are not removing people.

Mrs. MILLER. Uh-huh.

Mr. NOBILE. It is pretty slam-dunk. You know, the partisanship nature of the question makes it very difficult to get anyone to just settle and resolve the questions.

Mrs. MILLER. Representative Bollin, what steps would you like Congress to take to ensure that States like Michigan and Illinois are fulfilling their responsibilities under Federal law to maintain clean and accurate voter rolls?

Ms. BOLLIN. One is, I do we need to establish—kind of reset these universal base standards, No. 1.

No. 2 is, I do think that the post-election audits would help in this regard, the list maintenance. I think that we should be working in concert with the Michigan legislature, at the Federal level as well, to make sure that these records are turned over.

The responsibility—you know, in Michigan, we have very decentralized elections, and while the Secretary of State wants to take over much of this, we do need partners in this. I do think that that is what this Act can do, is, again, relegate the authority back to our locals and have the assurance.

If there is funding, I think the funding should be tied to compliance.

Mrs. MILLER. Uh-huh.

Ms. BOLLIN. Unfortunately—I mean, I know we do not want to tie fundings, but, as the Chair of Appropriations, especially in split Government, these are common-sense reforms; these are not partisan reforms. We should all be on board trying to allow people to vote. How does that happen? That is accurate voter rolls and verification.

Mrs. MILLER. Well, that is what the American people want.

I want to thank you all for the great and courageous work that you are doing. Keep it up.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman STEIL. The gentlewoman yields back.

This concludes our questions for today's hearing.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for appearing today and your willingness to testify.

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

[J. Kenneth Blackwell testimony follows:]

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

Written Testimony in Support of the Make Elections Great Again (MEGA) Act

February 6, 2026

Testimony before

United States House of Representatives
Committee on House Administration

Testimony by
The Hon. J Kenneth Blackwell
Chair, Election Integrity
America First Policy Institute

Dear Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelli, and Members of the Committee on House Administration,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of the Make Elections Great Again (MEGA) Act, which would establish commonsense reforms that enhance election security.

As the former Secretary of State of Ohio, a former United States Ambassador at the United Nations, the former Chairman of the bipartisan International Foundation for Electoral Systems, and the Chair of Election Integrity at the America First Policy Institute, I have been blessed with a wealth of experience in election administration and election policy. I unequivocally support this bill and applaud the Committee for its consideration.

The commonsense reforms in this bill would make American elections secure, transparent, and accountable, protecting voter rights and ballot integrity. The MEGA Act modernizes outdated federal laws addressing voter registration, voting processes, and election administration.

The provisions of this bill are key to ensuring fair, transparent, and secure elections.

- **Requires photo ID to cast a ballot.** This is the most fundamental pillar to a secure election—the voter must prove that they are who they claim to be. A CNN poll just released shows that 83% of Americans support voter ID laws. Countries like Botswana, Bangladesh, and Bolivia require photo ID, so why doesn't the United States?

- **Requires citizenship verification at voter registration.** American elections belong to American citizens. Simply checking a box to self-affirm is not enough; there must be documentary proof. As of late 2025, 19 states and the District of Columbia issue driver's license to non-citizens, which can verify their identity but not their legal eligibility to vote. This second layer of verification is crucial for ensuring that only Americans vote in America's elections.

- **Improves voter roll maintenance**. Voter list maintenance is the process of identifying voters who have moved, died, or otherwise become ineligible. The USPS's National

AMERICA FIRST POLICY INSTITUTE AFPI

Change of Address database and the Social Security Death Index can lag real-world changes, leading to outdated or duplicate records, and even having deceased or ineligible people on the rolls. To ensure voter rolls are accurate and current, best practices include drawing from multi-source identity, address, and property/utility records that update in real time. Doing so will help election offices identify voter information changes and other discrepancies early in the NVRA list-maintenance window.

- **Ensures ballots are received by Election Day.** Ballots received after Election Day prolong the counting process, which can create opportunities for fraud, and inject uncertainty and public skepticism into the election process. This was evident during the 2020 election, when Pennsylvania received 60,000 ballots three full days after Election Day, extending the vote count well beyond Election Night and contributing to widespread concern about election accuracy amid delayed results. That year, voter confidence in the accuracy of elections fell to just 59%, while a Rasmussen poll found that 82% of Americans believe ballots should be returned by Election Day. There should be no delays in delivering timely results.

- **Prohibits the federal government from using tax dollars for voter registration.** Under the previous administration, federal agencies served as voter registration centers under Executive Order 14019; this was repealed by President Trump immediately after he assumed office. State and local authorities conduct elections, not the federal government. To put it plainly, a Texan shouldn't be funding voter registration in Pennsylvania.

- **Guarantees paper ballots.** Electronic voting systems rely on software that can be vulnerable to bugs, hacking, or configuration errors that could miscount or mis-record votes, either intentionally or unintentionally. When votes are recorded electronically, there is no independent safeguard to prove that the recorded vote matches the voter's intent because there is no physical evidence. Only hand-marked paper ballots provide tamper-evident records that can be manually checked and verified. Paper trails are the strongest safeguard to verify election outcomes.

- **Prohibits ballot harvesting.** Ballot harvesting can easily manipulate votes by weakening the chain of custody for ballots between the time they are cast and when they are counted. Allowing third parties to collect and transport large numbers of ballots creates opportunities for manipulation and fraud. During the 2020 election, ballot harvesting was allowed to go unchecked in record numbers, especially when combined with mass mail-in ballots and unmonitored drop boxes.

- **Prohibits Ranked Choice Voting.** Ranked choice voting is an overly complicated system that asks voters to rank candidates instead of making a single, clear choice, and it can result in the candidate receiving the most votes not being declared the winner. Under this system, voters do not know which candidates will remain in later rounds or how their ballot will be counted once their first choice is eliminated. This process confuses voters, discourages participation, and erodes transparency and public confidence in elections.

- **Requires proper retention of all election records.** Historically, states have failed to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1960 requirement that all election records be retained for 22 months after an election. Defining what constitutes election records and reinforcing this existing law will compel states to maintain auditable records, boosting accuracy and transparency.

- **Prohibits automatic mailing of unrequested ballots.** Preemptively sending millions of ballots into circulation puts them at risk of being lost, intercepted, or mishandled before they are turned in, especially if voter lists are outdated. Limiting mail ballots to voters who actively request them helps keep a clear chain of custody and reduces opportunities for manipulation.

The MEGA Act is an absolutely necessary and long-overdue correction to advance commonsense solutions to the problems with our elections. For too long, lax rules and oversight have weakened election integrity, like allowing unchecked ballot harvesting and the automatic mailing of millions of ballots to reach outdated voter rolls. Furthermore, our elections are being increasingly compromised by weakening identification standards that make it easier for potential non-citizens to vote in American elections, which should, of course, be for American

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citizens only. The MEGA Act will increase American confidence in elections, helping restore trust and accountability in the electoral process.

The Hon. J. Kenneth Blackwell
Chair, Election Integrity
America First Policy Institute

Chairman STEIL. There being no further business, I want to thank our Members for their participation, and, without objection, the Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:53 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]

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