

evidence three Republican House candidates in California who he says were ahead on election day, but as absentee ballots came in, they fell further and further behind. He can't prove it, but to him, it stands to reason there must be fraud.

He knows better than that. That is just a pure falsehood. This is a deliberate campaign to undermine confidence in our elections. The seizing of ballot boxes in Georgia are meant to undermine confidence in our elections. The subpoenaing of records in Maricopa County are meant to undermine our confidence in elections. All the false talk about massive voter fraud is a complete fiction even according to the conservative Heritage Foundation—a complete fiction—and they would use this fiction to take away the legitimate franchise of millions of Americans.

Look, we have serious challenges in this country. We have a war that the American people don't want and don't support. We have the cost of basic necessities increasing all the time. We have a challenge we didn't face in the great recession or even the Great Depression. The problem today is not that people are out of work, although unemployment is rising. The problem today is that people are working, and they still can barely afford to get by.

That is the central challenge facing our country, and I think, until we grapple with that challenge, our democracy will be on fragile ground. When people see the quality of life their parents enjoyed as something better than what they have and when they look at their futures and they find it in doubt for their kids, all too many will entertain any demagogue who comes along and promises they alone can fix it.

But the answer cannot be to simply take away people's right to vote. We need to address that challenge to make the economy work for Americans again. Anyone working hard in this country should be able to provide for themselves and their families. That is what we should be focused on. That is what the President promised to do. Taking away their right to vote and turning us into some kind of—if not an autocracy, something less than a democracy, that is not the answer.

So I urge my colleagues to vote against this "Save our Political Heinies Act" and vote in favor of our democracy, to vote to expand the franchise to more and more Americans, not take it away because of the failure of the President's policies.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. MORENO. Madam President, I thought I would give my colleague from California some fantastic news. There are so many times in politics we hear bad news, but I am going to give him good news. When he takes a mo-

ment to read the actual bill, you don't have to read much. You just go right to page 1.

It says:

Ensuring Only Citizens Are Registered to Vote in Elections.

It says right here, at the bottom, that you can provide any of the following. I am not a lawyer, but I assume "any" is a pretty comprehensive word that means "any."

It says:

A form of identification issued consistent—
Let me read this slowly—

consistent with the requirements of the Real ID Act of 2005.

He just stated that the Real ID does not count. On page 2, lines 1 through 4, a Real ID absolutely does count as voter ID.

The idea that asking somebody to prove they are a U.S. citizen one time when they register to vote and to show who they are every time they vote is basic common sense. Now, it is not common in California because, in California, they don't require that.

My Democrat colleague is walking out of the Chamber as I say this, but I also would have liked him to have heard even better news—even better news—which is that you can go to Ohio and get gas for a \$1.75 less than in California. Why? Because of California's ridiculous policies. That is what is driving the price of fuel up for his constituents.

Where is the price of gas right now that he was railing about? Twenty-one cents a gallon less than it was at the end of the Biden administration.

I know we get into a lot of arguments here, and I know I am going to have my amazing colleague from Utah go further into this bill, but I just wanted to very briefly debunk two very simple things: California's problems are California's causing. The reason your gas prices are high is because you have basically banned all fossil fuels in your State while begging—by the way, do you want to know how California gets gas today? It leaves the port in Jacksonville on a ship. It goes to the Bahamas. It gets unloaded from that ship onto another ship. It then traverses from the Bahamas, by the way, off the coast of Florida. It goes all the way around the Panama Canal and disembarks in California. Why? Because they refuse to have a pipeline go through their State. That is why the price of oil is high in California. It has nothing to do with what is going on in the Middle East, but yet we digress.

We are here to talk about two simple things: Should you have to prove you are a citizen when you register to vote and should you have to prove that you are who you are when you actually cast a ballot?

With that, I yield the floor to my colleague from Utah, who will go into the 28 pages of common sense that is in a very well-written bill.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Mr. LEE. Madam President, we often consider difficult, complicated issues in this Chamber. It happens all the time. In fact, if it is not complicated, we sometimes wonder why we are devoting time to any particular matter. Very often, these are issues that don't enjoy consensus among the American people. We might have a degree of consensus over the existence of a problem but a thousand different ways of tackling that problem. In other instances, there might not even be consensus on whether a problem exists or what that problem might be. This is not one of those moments.

This issue could not be simpler. American elections are for American citizens. This is an assertion that is so elementary that its controversy is itself the only remarkable feature. There are 83 percent of Americans who support voter ID—83 percent. Out of 100 people, 83 of them believe that we need that. That is 95 percent of Republicans and 71 percent of Democrats. That is still 71 out of every 100 Democrats who agree with us.

Now think about that for a minute. How many issues in this country unite 83 percent of all Americans? This is one of them.

For months now, I have been working with colleagues, working with President Trump, and with citizens across this great country—citizens who have rallied behind this effort in numbers and with a degree of intensity that I have not seen in my entire time in the Senate, and I am now in my 16th year here. All of them are begging us to pass the SAVE America Act, not in a nonchalant, haphazard fashion but instead in a way that indicates they really feel it—that they feel it strongly, in fact. They understand the need for this.

I have heard one thing over and over and over again: Why would anyone oppose this? Who would oppose the notion that only American citizens can vote in American elections?

In this room, I can't imagine any of us would think that we, in not being citizens of the United Kingdom or of Yemen or of Japan or of the Philippines, could vote in elections in any of those countries. Why? Well, because we are not citizens of those countries.

If we happened to visit those countries, would that change anything? No, not a thing. What if we lived there for a few years but didn't become citizens? Still not. It still makes no difference. If we are not citizens, we wouldn't dream of being able to vote in their elections. Why should American elections be any different? Why should someone who is not a citizen of the United States of America be able to vote in a U.S. election? Well, of course, they shouldn't.

Look, the SAVE America Act takes those dynamics into account, and it says something very simple. It says that only American citizens should be able to vote in U.S. elections. And it does something very important. It

makes it easy to vote and hard to cheat. You need both of those ingredients to have a good election. It has got to be easy to vote and hard to cheat. You can achieve both at the same time just as you can chew gum and walk at the same time, but this is a whole lot more important than being able to chew gum while walking. In any free society that purports to have a representative government of any form, especially in a constitutional republic like ours, you must have both. You can't cut corners on either one. That is common sense, and yet here we are.

If you don't accept that only Americans should vote in American elections, then what exactly are you defending? Tell us why you want to make it easier for noncitizens to vote in our elections.

But, so far, what we have heard from Democrats is not that. What we have heard from Democrats in the U.S. Senate Chamber—and I say here “in the U.S. Senate Chamber” because that is different than Democrats nationwide wherein more than 7 out of 10 agree that we need reforms like what the SAVE America Act would bring about. It is only here in the Capital City of this great Nation; it is only here in this building—in Congress, in the House of Representatives and in the Senate—that this is considered volatile or somehow unacceptable by Democrats. It is only these Democrats who inhabit these hallways and who serve in these two legislative Chambers who regard this as somehow phenomenally controversial, and what we have heard from these Democrats here is nothing but fearmongering and outright lies.

Now, whether they themselves know that they are lies or they are just believing lies others have told them, that is a topic for a different day. I am not going to try to vet that out here. None of us can know what any other person is thinking or feeling, but I can assure you that these are, at their core, the product of fearmongering and of lies.

They told us that requiring proof of citizenship to vote in U.S. elections is somehow “racist.” The minority leader himself called this bill Jim Crow 2.0. Wow—what an accusation, what a crazy, absurd, ridiculous, and, frankly, insulting accusation. I think he owes the American people an explanation as to how requiring proof of citizenship to vote is tantamount to racial segregation laws. Racial segregation laws, under the banner of Jim Crow, the Democratic Party itself forced on a substantial portion of the American population over many decades in one of the most evil—evil legislative tirades in American history for a prolonged period of time.

Why he would want to draw any parallel to Jim Crow is beyond the ability of this Senator to understand. I don't get it. Frankly, the American people aren't buying it, nor should they.

They have told us that requiring photo ID somehow “disenfranchises” women. I can't think of anything more

racist. I can't think of anything more misogynistic than saying people of color or women, whether married women or otherwise, are incapable of obtaining an ID and proof of citizenship. That is frankly insulting.

It is something that millions of Americans do every single day—often many times a day—to get a job, to board a plane, to open a bank account, to enroll in school, to shovel snow in New York City; for that matter, to go to the Oscars, the Emmys, the Grammys, the Super Bowl, almost any theatrical production, and, yes, to get into the Democratic National Convention. To get into the Democratic National Convention, you have to show photo ID, and you have to establish credentials showing that you have a right to be there and participate in that event.

So if the SAVE America Act is Jim Crow 2.0, then so, too, is the Democratic Party itself; so, too, are the campaign rallies hosted by my friend and colleague the Senator from Georgia, up for reelection this year, who recently advertised a campaign rally and announced on the same website that to get into said campaign rally, you would have to show photo ID.

We are not getting the story. We are not getting the complete story. We are not getting anything close to the complete story, and we are going to talk about that tonight.

Look, millions upon millions of married women navigate documentation requirements every single day for a whole host of reasons. To suggest that Americans, that women, that people of color are somehow incapable of doing something so basic is deeply, fundamentally insulting, and it is beneath the dignity of this Chamber and all who occupy it for these arguments to be raised here in this hallowed Chamber.

I can't think of anything more patronizing, more dismissive, more out of touch than telling Americans that they can't meet the same basic requirements that govern so many other parts of daily life—not just some people's daily lives but the daily lives of pretty much everyone in this country.

This bill does not suppress voters. It protects them. It treats them like capable citizens in a functioning republic and ensures that their votes actually do matter.

And let's be honest. There is only one reason to oppose this bill and what it does—one reason: They want to cheat. This bill makes it easy to vote and hard to cheat. They are happy with exactly half of the equation and not the other half. But you can't have both and have a functioning representative government. You can't have half of the equation and have a successful constitutional republic. It doesn't work.

Here is today's headline from POLITICO. I am not exaggerating this. I don't write the news; I just report it.

Why climate champions are sweating the “SAVE America Act.”

It goes on to say:

If Republicans do ultimately succeed in getting a version of the bill passed, environmentalists and some Democrats fear it could damage the democratic process ahead of November's midterm elections and suppress the will of climate-minded voters and candidates.

The level of hyperbolic panic, of paranoid fantasy from the Democrats and the media enterprises they control is telling, and it is stunning, because the only way this bill changes election outcomes is if those outcomes have been dependent on votes that shouldn't have been counted to begin with. If that is part of the plan, then I can understand the panic. That is the reality.

We are closer than ever to getting this bill across the finish line. Just a few hours ago, we voted to proceed to this bill, and that is because the American people have made their voices heard. They have shown up. They have spoken out. They have demanded that our elections—their elections—be protected.

Failure here is not an option, and it must never become such because if we cannot secure the most basic element of our elections, of any free and fair system of elections, we are inviting a level of distrust that this country cannot afford.

I would say this to my Republican colleagues: If we do not act on an issue that commands this level of support, not just from our own base but from the entire spectrum among the American people—this level of support—we should not be surprised when the American people lose confidence in our willingness to fight for them if we fail to get it done and to do everything along the way in order to ensure its passage.

This is our moment. Stand for a simple principle. Let the American people see who is willing to defend their sacred right to vote and who is not.

I am confident that the principle at the heart of this legislation will, in fact, prevail. It will prevail because it is fair, because it is right, because it reflects the truth, because it reflects how our laws are written and how human nature interacts with our system of laws.

This is the line. We have drawn it, and we must defend it. You are either willing to say that only American citizens should vote in American elections or you are not. There is no middle ground.

Sure, we can talk about whether this word or that word would most capably accomplish what we need it to. We can argue over a semicolon here or a comma there. But unless we are talking about how to achieve the same objective of making sure that only Americans vote in American elections, we will have missed the boat in a very dangerous way.

The American people are, to be sure, paying attention—very close attention, indeed—because they understand what is at stake. They understand that if

their vote is diluted, it is taken from them; if their elections are compromised—if their elections are compromised—their voice is diminished. That is what this bill prevents.

So let's stop pretending this is complicated. It is not. If you believe, as I do, that only American citizens should vote in American elections, then this should be the easiest vote of your entire legislative career—not just that which has passed already but that which you are likely to see ever while you are here.

Now, sure, there are all sorts of votes about, you know, recognizing National Sofa Care Month or this or that awareness resolution, but in the world of actual laws coming into being in this Chamber, you are not going to find something much similar—much more true to this principle of being clear, of getting the message right, than this one, of this being a very simple equation. We have to get this done, and we have to get it right.

While we are on this topic, I want to talk a little bit about why this bill is necessary and walk you through some of the legislative history, some of the history in American law and American society that has made this bill so necessary and so timely today, because there have been times in our history when this wasn't the same risk that it is today. But it will help if we set the table by explaining how we got here and why it is that we need this so badly, so immediately, right now.

Let's start with something that happened about 33 years ago when Congress passed a law back in 1993 called the National Voter Registration Act. It is frequently abbreviated as the NVRA and sometimes known also as the motor voter law.

The NVRA says in essence that in any State that chooses to participate, as the overwhelming majority of States do—nearly every State participates—in any participating State, anybody going into a DMV to apply for a driver's license may simultaneously register to vote if they would like to do so. It made it easier for more people to register to vote doing something that most Americans—the overwhelming majority of all Americans do from time to time, which is get a driver's license.

So you could go in, and while filling out the paperwork, after establishing who it is that you are, you could also say, "I would like, with this same paperwork, to register to vote" because, after all, they have your address, they have your name, and they have other information about who you are.

So the same State that is processing your driver's license application can also in that same moment harness the power of a State to register you to vote. That is one of many things that made the NVRA appealing.

A couple of things have happened since the NVRA passed that warrant our careful consideration of this legislation now and that make this legislation so very necessary.

For one thing, over time, you have seen different trends in States in how they issue driver's licenses, to whom they issue them. There have been times when States didn't necessarily have occasion to even consider the question of whether or under what circumstances to give driver's licenses to those who are either not citizens of the United States or perhaps, in addition to being not citizens of the United States, are here illegally.

As some of this became a little bit more complicated when legislation passed in 2005 dealing with the REAL ID issues, with this move toward establishing a REAL ID driver's license that could have some indication as to whether somebody was a citizen, States have paid careful attention to that.

Most States today—the overwhelming majority of States today will issue a driver's license to a person who is not a citizen of the United States. In I believe 19 States, plus the District of Columbia, you could get a driver's license even if you are not just a noncitizen but a noncitizen who is here without documentation, without legal permission, authority to be here. If you are an illegal immigrant, you can still get one in 19 States, plus the District of Columbia.

So if you can do that, if you can walk into a DMV in any of those jurisdictions and check a box and sign your name, in theory, you can register to vote.

Well, some of this came to a head about 20 years after the NVRA was passed when, in 2013, the Supreme Court of the United States decided a case called *Arizona v. Inter Tribal Council of Arizona*. In that case, the Supreme Court of the United States conclusively interpreted the NVRA as preempting out any State authority that might have otherwise existed when it comes to requiring proof of citizenship of someone registering to vote, using an NVRA form at a DMV while applying for a driver's license.

In other words, they said: Even if a State is worried about perhaps inadvertently registering noncitizens to vote, even if in certain circumstances they might have affirmative reason to believe that one or more voters are not citizens of the United States, they may not ask for any proof of citizenship in that moment.

Now, I believe that interpretation was misguided. I believe it was wrong as a matter of statutory construction. Justice Alito, my former boss, wrote a masterful dissent explaining why the majority got it wrong. Nonetheless, the majority ruling still stands. It conclusively interpreted the NVRA as prohibiting the States from making any effort to figure out whether somebody was a citizen as long as they were using the NVRA-supplied form when registering someone to vote.

This created a big problem—a big problem that a lot of people, myself included, hadn't thought much about

until relatively recently, until just a few years ago. I got involved in this, started writing this bill 2 or 3 years ago when I put all of these pieces together and I realized what it could spell for the American Republic if we didn't solve the problem.

Without regard to what might have already happened and what might be happening today, when you play this forward, even if you were starting from the assumption that none of this ever happens, that nobody ever has registered to vote in the past who was not a citizen or never had voted in any election who was not a citizen—that is an assumption contrary to fact, but even if you were to reach that conclusion, you play this forward, and this could and ultimately will lead to a whole lot of mischief when you put all of those factors into the mix, especially when you consider what happened between 2021 and 2025.

On or about—I don't know—let's say January 20, 2020, through to January 20, 2025, there were policies in place in this country that led to relatively open borders, you might say, in which an estimated 10 to 15 million people entered this country unlawfully, with many of them here to this day.

(Mrs. MOODY assumed the Chair.)

Some people have estimated that the total population of noncitizens inside the United States today stands in the neighborhood of around 30 million people. That is a lot of people—a lot of people who, in most States, could apply for and receive a driver's license, particularly if they live in some States more than others. And all they have to do is walk into a DMV, apply for a driver's license, check a box saying, "Yes, I would like, while applying for my driver's license, simultaneously to register to vote." And all that remains after that is you sign your name. And by signing your name, you are certifying that you are entitled to register to vote, that you are a citizen and not under any kind of legal impediment from voting. And that is done.

So even if you were someone who assumes, contrary to fact—and contrary to more facts that I believe will be coming out in greater detail in the coming days and weeks—even if you were someone who believes that this does not happen, that people don't register to vote if they are not citizens of this country, this still would be a trend, given all of the circumstances that I have just outlined, all the things that have happened since the NVRA became the law of the land back in 1993.

This is something that we should all very much worry about. This should concern us greatly; that is, you don't want people voting in a system in which they are not entitled to vote.

You think about every other circumstance where people vote. It is not just in U.S. Federal elections for Federal office, which is the concern of this particular legislation. In countless interactions—separate and apart from Federal elections, separate and apart

from State elections—people hold elections of one sort or another.

One set of elections that people sometimes encounter are within voluntary organizations or within a homeowners association. They might have elections to decide different issues, to elect their leadership. They might have those on a PTA, on different charitable organizations, fraternal organizations that they might belong to. In every one of those circumstances, you don't want somebody who is not entitled to vote, who is not part of the organization, to be casting a vote.

If it is a homeowners association, you don't want somebody who is not part of that organization, because they don't own a home within the homeowners association's jurisdiction, to be casting a vote. If it is a shareholder election in a corporate context, you don't want nonshareholders casing a vote. Why? Well, they don't have the same interest that the shareholders have.

We sure as heck don't want foreign nationals voting in U.S. elections because what unites us is the fact that we are citizens. We may come to things from different perspectives, different parts of the country, different origins. We might have inherited different language patterns, different languages, belief systems, political beliefs, cultural customs—whatever. But what unites us is that we are American citizens.

If you start inviting in and allowing those who are not U.S. citizens to do it, bad things could happen. You talk about the risk of foreign election interference. It is really significant here, as every American's vote is threatened to be diluted every time this happens.

Now, it is not just there that it matters, that we prove who we are or that we are entitled to do the thing that we want to do. Think of many other circumstances you encounter. When you go to the bank and you are going to withdraw money, we should all hope that any place anybody has money deposited on account isn't going to allow somebody else to show up and withdraw money from that account without having to prove who they are. That would be its own form of chaos.

When people go to pick up a prescription drug, to go to the doctor, to seek medical treatment, to apply for a hunting license or a fishing license, to apply for Social Security benefits, to board a plane, to pick up theater tickets, to do all kinds of things where it matters who you are, your ability to engage in the activity that you want to engage in depends, hinges, on your ability to demonstrate that you are who you say you are and you have the right to participate in the thing you want to participate in.

Harkening back a moment ago to my discussion of the Democratic National Committee, the Democratic National Convention would be crazy to allow people in there who have not been elected as delegates to the Democratic National Convention—same with the

Republicans. And so what do they do? Well, they have to show ID.

What about here? Look, in order to get here, all of us who have been elected to the U.S. Senate had to go through a series of processes and procedures that involved showing who we are and that we are entitled to participate in this process, in several, very meaningful steps.

I remember, the very first time I filed to run for the U.S. Senate, I had to go to the Lieutenant Governor's office. The Lieutenant Governor in Utah, under the Utah Constitution, performs the secretary of state function. It is the Lieutenant Governor who oversees the conduct of elections in our State, and it is the Lieutenant Governor's office that files and processes the candidate filing information.

I had to go to the Lieutenant Governor's office all three times I have run for and been elected to the U.S. Senate, establish who I am, establish my citizenship and my residency in the State. And, of course, there is payment that has to go along with it. And after all of that process, you have the opportunity to be on the ballot. If everything goes well, if you are nominated by your political party or otherwise get on the ballot, then you are considered.

But long before any of us ever showed up here to cast our very first vote or give our very first speech as Senators or even be sworn in, there was other paperwork that we had to process in order to establish who we are and that we have a right to be here and that we have a right to cast a vote.

Obviously, we had to win elections. So there is a very important document without which I wouldn't be here, without which any of us wouldn't be here: our election certificate. In my State, again, that too is issued by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, performing that secretary of state function, that certifies the election results.

All three times I have been elected to the U.S. Senate, I have had to produce that document, and that document has been sent by the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Utah to the Secretary of the Senate, who had to review that.

I had to produce ID when I showed up here in multiple forms. In fact, I had to, just as everyone does, every time they start a new job as an employee. If you are an American citizen, anytime you start new employment with a new employer, you have to fill out a form. The form is called the I-9. It is not just that you fill out the form. You have to fill out the form, and you have to produce, yes, proof of citizenship—because if you are not a U.S. citizen, then you have to produce a visa, and you have to show that your visa status allows you to have the type of employment from the employer that has hired you. But even if you are just an American citizen, you have still got to prove that.

And the I-9 and the requirements that go with it are very exacting. As I recall, there are a few ways of proving

that. You can prove it by showing up with a U.S. passport. If you don't have a passport, as many Americans don't, then you can show up with a birth certificate and a government-issued photo ID. At some point there has been a Social Security card involved, but not everybody I know carries around their original Social Security card all the time. So there are other ways that allow you to do it without the original Social Security card, but there are other ways of doing it. But it is pretty exacting. And you can't start the job unless or until you have proven who you are and that you are a U.S. citizen.

Now, when we wrote the SAVE America Act, we allowed for those same documents to be used in order to establish your citizenship. But we didn't stop there because even that, in some circumstances, could be more difficult for some people. So we made it even more flexible. Yes, you can establish it by producing a U.S. passport, if in fact you have one, if that U.S. passport establishes your citizenship; likewise, a passport card, if you don't have the whole thing, and that establishes your citizenship. You can do it by a REAL ID-compliant driver's license, if that REAL ID-compliant driver's license also establishes your citizenship conclusively, as some do and others do not. That will also suffice. As with the I-9, you can also do it with the combination of a birth certificate and a government-issued photo ID.

But in addition to all of those things, we also have some catchall exceptions that cover all kinds of territory, including one of my least favorite arguments but one of the most frequently arising arguments that is made, that somehow this is going to disenfranchise women everywhere, especially married women who obviously, at the time of their birth, neither they nor their parents could have had any idea, first of all, when or whether they might be getting married; secondly, if and when they got married later, whether they would choose to take on the last name of their husband, of the person they married, and what that name would be.

This isn't really a problem. I mean, this actually happens all the time in other contexts. Whether it is for your interaction with the Internal Revenue Service, with the Social Security Administration, a driver's license, there are all kinds of ways to deal with that. And the SAVE America Act makes clear, if you have changed your name as a result of getting married, obviously a marriage certificate will suffice. If you change your name through some other mechanism, some record of the change in circumstance, whether that is an adoption certificate, a divorce decree that with it came another change of names, you can supply that.

But it also contains something else that is available not just for people who have changed their name but people in lots of other circumstances in which, for whatever reason, they don't

have the documentation. So imagine, for instance, that you are somebody who had changed your name upon getting married, but you can't find your marriage certificate. No problem. We take care of that as part of the same provision that we take care of those who may have lost all their documentation of all their citizenship. Maybe their house burned down yesterday and everything is gone. Poof, up in flames—it is gone. Maybe your dog ate all of your documentation that you would otherwise use when starting a new job and filling out your I-9 form. Maybe you never had it to begin with. This bill takes care of it. We made clear of that. We went out of our way to make sure that that would be the case.

In this legislation, the House-passed SAVE America Act that we proceeded to just a few hours ago in the U.S. Senate, it can be found at page 12, line 22. Or if you want to look at the Schmitt-Lee substitute amendment that may be discussed later this week, it is on page 14, line 17. Either way, the text says the same thing: If you don't have the documentation, whether of a name change or of any of it, you can supply it by a sworn statement that you yourself can fill out, a sworn affidavit in which you provide the basic details surrounding your birth, if you are a natural-born citizen of this country, describing when and where you were born, to whom and so forth; or if you are a naturalized citizen, the circumstances surrounding and dates involved in your naturalization. You then hand it over to the State election official who is in charge of those things, and it then becomes the burden of the State to confirm or refute what you have submitted under oath, under penalty of perjury, to do this, with the understanding that if it checks out, if you are who you say you are, you are still going to be able to register to vote and, in fact, cast a vote, notwithstanding the fact that you may not have any of those documents, either because your house burned down, your dog ate them, or you never had them or otherwise.

So these arguments are not legitimate, and these arguments, which I see made every single day—sometimes in this Chamber, sometimes on social media or elsewhere—these are false arguments made with knowledge of their falsity or reckless disregard for their truthfulness or both. And they are inexcusable. They do not carry water.

This is all about making it easy to vote and hard to cheat. We have to do both. We must do both.

Now, getting back to what I was talking about a minute ago, when we show up here, by the time we have shown up here, we have had to establish who we are, our right to run for the U.S. Senate, and we have to produce other documentation showing that we have, in fact, been elected to the U.S. Senate.

When we do that, we also have to fill out the I-9 form here and establish,

again, that we are who we are, who we say we are, and that we are, in fact, U.S. citizens. And if we do all of that right, then they give us a sort of cheat code version of the documentation, this pin right here.

I remember when I first got here, the day I was sworn in, January 2011, after my first election had occurred a few weeks earlier in November of 2010, I stood right over there. I was sworn into the Senate.

Right after I was sworn in, they had me sign a little book indicating that I was, in fact, sworn in as a Senator, and they gave me a pen and then they gave me this little pin. I wasn't sure what to think about the pin. I am not really into accessories or jewelry, but it was in a nice little box, and I wasn't sure what to do with it. Because I don't wear such things frequently, I put it in a drawer of my desk and I closed the drawer and I kind of forgot all about it.

After I had been here for a while, I commented to one of my colleagues: Is it me or does everybody get carded a lot here?

When I first showed up, I had a great head of hair, by my standards today. It is gone now. But I looked young. I was 39 years old when I was elected to the Senate. In the Senate, being 39 can feel like you are sort of like 12 years old or something like that.

I got carded a lot, in part, because I didn't—maybe I didn't yet look like a Senator to them. In any event, they didn't recognize me as a Senator, and I found, regularly, that I was having to pull out my ID, you know my Senate ID, and the cops would look at it as I would approach the building, make sure that the tamper-resistant strip was intact, and they would say: Well, I guess we have got to let him in.

I commented to a colleague saying: How long will it take before I stop getting carded every time I come into the Senate?

And this colleague said: Well, you got to wear the pin.

What pin?

Well, when you got sworn in, they gave you that little pin.

Then I remembered the little pin that came in the little jewelry box. I put it in the desk drawer and I closed the drawer and I forgot all about it.

I said: Why do I need to wear the pin?

They said: Well, the security personnel in and around the Capitol recognize that pin because it is worn only by Senators, and it is sort of like your portable ID badge. You won't have to get carded as much.

Ever since then, I have worn the lapel pin, and it works like a charm. I have even named it. I call it my "Sorry, Senator" pin because if I get carded, I point to it, and they say: Oh, sorry, Senator. You can come on in.

I remember one day I was standing over there at one of those desks in between two votes. I had one arm gently resting on the desk in front of me. One of the nonuniformed security personnel came up to me and said in a somewhat

harsh tone of voice: Excuse me, sir. Will you please not lean on the Senator's desk.

I, still being new, I was very sensitive to not want to do anything wrong.

I said: I am terribly sorry. I will try not to put any weight on it—because a lot of these desks are original equipment, which means they are, you know, 150 years old or more, and we want to be careful with them. I thought he was concerned about the fact that I had one arm gently resting on the desk in front of me.

But the inquiry was not over. He wanted to interrogate a little bit further. He then said: Are you with minority?

The Republicans—I am a Republican. We were in the minority party at the time.

Are you with the minority?

I said: What do you mean, on this vote or the next? I often vote with my party. Sometimes they get it wrong. Sometimes I don't vote with my party. I am not sure why you are asking this.

He said: Are you with the minority leader?

And I said: Well, he is our leader. Why wouldn't I be with him? I don't understand your question. Is this a loyalty test?

And then he asked me another question that made me realize what was really going on.

He said: Are you part of the minority leader's staff?

Then I realized, oh, OK. That is why I am getting the third degree.

So I pointed to the "Sorry, Senator" pin, thinking that would be the end of the inquiry. All it got me was a blank stare for some reason.

And at that point, I realized what was happening, and I used my title. I didn't want to use my title. I don't like to use my title. It makes me feel uncomfortable to this day, even after 15, going on 16 years.

So I kind of mumbled the answer. I said: I am Senator LEE.

He said: What?

And I said: OK. My name is MIKE LEE. I come from the State of Utah. It is sort of squarish and chair-shaped. It is in the Rocky Mountains, best snow on Earth, really well-known place to visit.

And then he realized what was happening and what I was saying. And he said to me in one hurried breath: I am terribly sorry for the misunderstanding, sir. My name is Steve if you want to report me.

And then before I could tell him it was OK, Steve was fast, and he got out of Dodge. So he was too quick.

But from then on until the day he retired, I always said hello to Steve, and I smiled. I said: Hi, Steve, just to make sure there were no hard feelings because it was an honest mistake; it was not a big deal.

Steve retired a few years ago, and I miss him. Only recently it occurred to me that his name is probably not Steve. Maybe Steve is somebody he

worked with that he didn't like, but he was looking for that badge of authenticity. And when he finally saw it and contextualized it, he realized, yes, that is worn only by Senators. He can be here.

My point is this: In order for us to be here to make these decisions in this building, in this Capitol, affecting 350, 360 million Americans, we first have to prove that we are who we say we are and that we have a right to be here to make those decisions. So, too, with our elections.

We don't want people choosing those who will make laws on their behalf unless they themselves are the people who are the people referred to in the Constitution who get to make those decisions. So let's get this right.

Let's not get it wrong. Let's not pretend that this is something that it is not. It is fundamentally unfair and dishonest in every way, shape, and form to refer to this as racist, misogynist, as voter suppression. It is none of those things.

This is entirely about one thing, which is making sure that our elections are secure, that they are legitimate, that they are fair. We want to make it easy to vote and hard to cheat.

Yes, we can have both of those things, and we must pursue both of them or in the long run, we will have neither. We will have none of them, and it will become a problem. So let's nip this thing in the bud, and let's get this right.

Let's make it easy to vote, and let's make it hard to cheat.

Nothing short of chaos ensues if we don't have that, especially whereas here we have an existing system of laws that make it so unbelievably, undeniably easy for someone to lie with no further proof, no proof of who they are, no proof of why it is that they have the right to vote.

So how does that happen, and how do they justify it? One of the most amusing, if bewildering, arguments that I hear—and I hear it all the time and have since the day we first introduced the original SAVE Act about 2 years ago—is that we don't need it. We don't need it. Why? Why don't we need it? Because it is already illegal for non-citizens to vote.

In fact, it is a felony offense. So we know it doesn't happen because it is already against law.

Well, let's think about how that would work elsewhere. Let's take a really familiar example. If you want to buy alcohol, you want to go into a bar or convenience store, liquor store, you want to buy alcohol, what can and should and must every American expect? To get carded.

Now, this is as a teetotaler something that I see mostly on TV and in the movies, but I also see it in real life when I see somebody buying something, something that I as a teetotaler don't drink, but you get carded when you buy alcohol.

It doesn't matter where, you are going to get carded. It doesn't matter

how old you are, you are going to get carded.

Now, if it were acceptable there to say it is illegal for a minor to buy alcohol or it is illegal for anyone to sell or otherwise give alcohol to a minor, somebody who is too young to buy alcohol, somebody who is not yet past the age of 21, so they don't do it, so we don't need it because it is already unlawful—well, guess what would happen? There would be a whole lot more procuring of alcoholic beverages in retail establishments by people who are too young to drink. It would happen left and right.

It would be folly to assume: Well, it is already illegal, so it doesn't happen, so we don't need to do anything about it.

So what did we do? Well, we instituted a series of laws to make it so that you have to show ID when you buy alcohol. It doesn't mean that nobody can ever cheat to break their way through it. It doesn't mean that some people don't figure out clever ways of getting a fake ID or going through an intermediary, but there are more steps.

But to assume at the outset that it doesn't happen because it is already illegal, regardless of whether you are taking any steps at all to verify that somebody is who they claim to be and that they are eligible to do the thing that they are trying to do is absolutely ridiculous, and we cannot assume that our laws can be enforced, especially against the backdrop of the vulnerabilities that I have described.

The National Voter Registration Act, coupled with the 2015 interpretation by the Supreme Court in *Arizona v. Inter Tribal Council of Arizona*, coupled with the trend among States to issue driver's licenses to noncitizens, with 19 of those States and the District of Columbia issuing them openly, even to known illegal immigrants, and then with an estimated 10 to 15 million Americans—some people think more—coming into this country unlawfully just in the 4-year period from 2021 to 2025, to say that we would be acting recklessly is a gross understatement.

So, no, this is not some sort of subterfuge to engage in Jim Crow 2.0 any more than the Democratic National Convention or a JON OSSOFF campaign rally is about Jim Crow 2.0—and shame on anyone who stoops to that level of stupidity and dishonesty as to make that argument—nor is this about voter suppression.

If this is about voter suppression, then literally any law that is designed to make sure that there is no fraud, that there is no cheating in elections, would also be voter suppression.

Now does it add a step? Yes, of course, but we add steps all the time to make sure that we don't make it too easy, especially when it matters for somebody to just go in and take something that doesn't belong to them. And by taking something that belongs to others, cheapening it for them, diminishing substantially the value of what

those who actually have that right, who own that thing—namely, U.S. citizenship—would otherwise have access to, you are taking it from them. We can't allow that to happen.

This is why I am proud to be the original author and sponsor in the Senate of this bill, proud to have worked with my House counterpart Congressman CHIP ROY from the great State of Texas on this legislation.

We can get this done. And now that we are on the bill, we are going to debate it. I look forward to hearing the debates. I look forward in each and every instance to being able to refute the absurd arguments against it because, let's face it, there is no legitimate reason to oppose this bill. I stand by that, and I will continue to stand by that in the coming days and weeks. And I am ready for many, many weeks.

We are going to stay on this bill until it damn well passes because the American people demand and deserve nothing less than that. Our Republic will not function, our country will not thrive unless we can protect the sanctity of the elections that determine who makes the laws, who sets the policy in this country.

We can walk and chew gum at the same time. We can make it easy to vote and hard to cheat at the same time. We can, we must, and together we will.

We must pass the SAVE America Act.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

SAVE AMERICA ACT

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, the hour is late and many people have spoken tonight on this proposal by my colleague from Utah and others. But I just want to add my voice to the many who are very concerned about this legislation.

I listened with great interest to what my colleague had to say about the fact that this was somehow necessary, that somehow things were trending in the wrong direction, and that he did want to make it easy to vote.

I think the fact that he wants to make it easy to vote is the essence of what this debate is about because the U.S. citizen is given a constitutional right to vote in our elections and the States to control the running of our elections. It is hard to imagine how the passing of the SAVE Act would help you on those constitutional rights.

I am here tonight to add my voice. Happy Saint Patrick's Day for those who are here wearing the green, and I am pretty sure you wish you were out of here by now and at some Irish festivities celebrating the day.

But trust me, the Irish in the United States of America appreciate voting rights and appreciate the right to vote, and so do many other segments of American society who have had challenges in the past to get their votes counted.