



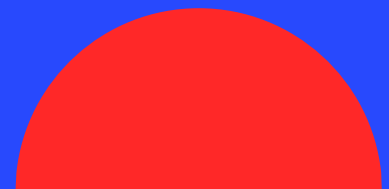
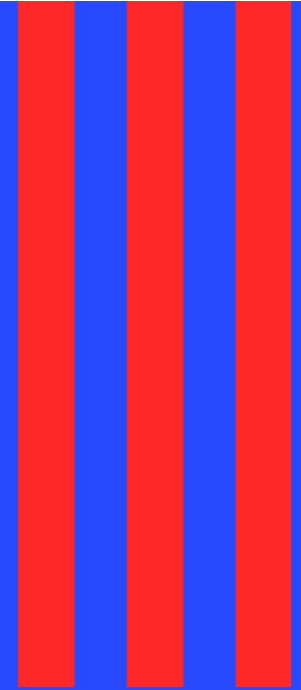
CHALLENGES TO DEMOCRACY

Monday, April 13th, 2026

1:00pm

ALLYSON BETTIS

**Retired City Clerk/Treasurer of Garden City
and Former Interim City Clerk for the City of Southfield**



Voter Suppression History

Nothing New

**Prosperous
Restricted
Status Quo**



Post Office Postmark Policy Change (?)

USPS Policy Change

Postmarks simply cancel postal stamps.

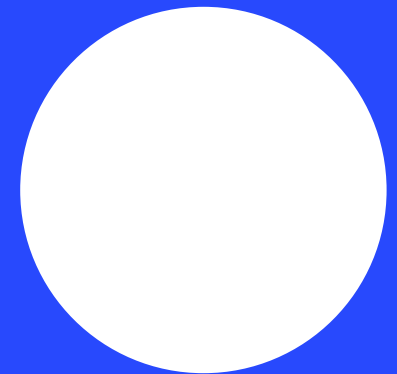
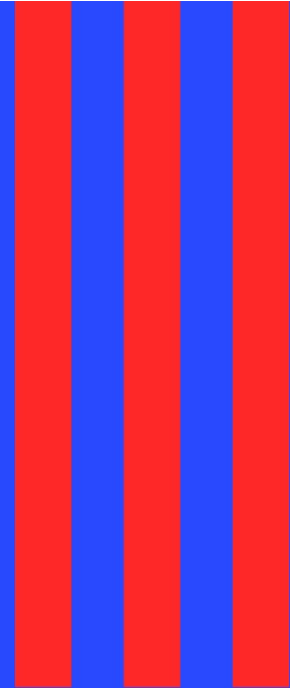
Not necessary when received by USPS.

Delays always possible.

New Executive Order 3/2026

USPS decides which AV ballots are valid.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2026/03/ensuring-citizenship-verification-and-integrity-in-federal-elections/>



Absentee Ballot Laws & Procedures

**Must be collected by authorized City
Clerk personnel.**

**Must be received by Election Day
8pm**

Except:

Military & Overseas Voters



RESOURCES

Track Your AV Ballot

- [Michigan Voter Information Center](https://mVIC.sos.state.mi.us/)
- <https://mVIC.sos.state.mi.us/>

Track Election Laws & Bills

- [Michigan Legislature](https://www.legislature.mi.gov/)
- <https://www.legislature.mi.gov/>

Track Local Government

- https://troymi.gov/community/government/citycouncil/council_meeting_webcast.php
- <https://www.fmgov.com/government-business/agendasminutesvideos/>
- https://www.rochesterhills.org/government/city_council/meeting_information.php
- <https://www.cityofsouthfield.com/government/city-council>
- <https://www.waterfordmi.gov/710/Public-Meetings>

Largest Cities in Oakland County by Population

Troy: ~89,209
Farmington Hills: ~84,173
Rochester Hills: ~78,330
Southfield: ~76,874
Waterford (Township): ~70,538
Novi: ~67,675
West Bloomfield: ~66,586
Pontiac (County Seat): ~62,528
Royal Oak: ~58,251
Commerce: ~43,145

SAVE Act

Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act

Introduced in House (01/03/2025); PASSED 4/10/25;
H.R.7296 - SAVE America Act; Introduced

This bill requires individuals to provide documentary proof of U.S. citizenship when registering to vote in federal elections.

Specifically, the bill prohibits states from accepting and processing an application to register to vote in a federal election unless the applicant presents documentary proof of U.S. citizenship. The bill specifies what documents are considered acceptable proof of U.S. citizenship, such as identification that complies with the REAL ID Act of 2005 that indicates U.S. citizenship.

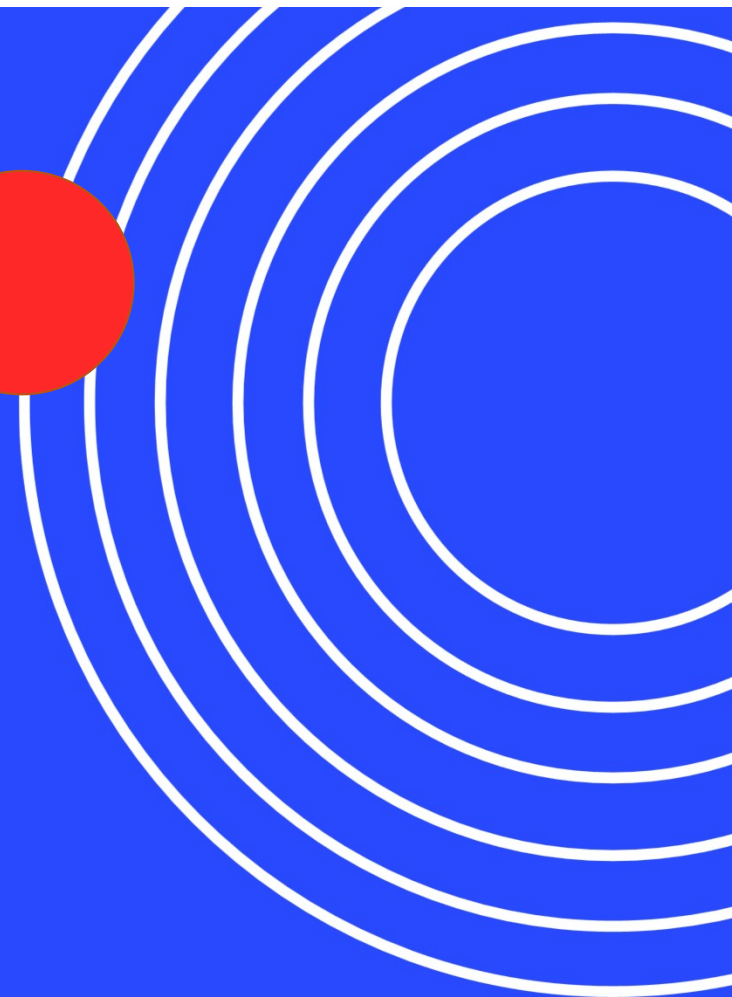
Further, the bill (1) prohibits states from registering an individual to vote in a federal election unless, at the time the individual applies to register to vote, the individual provides documentary proof of U.S. citizenship; and (2) requires states to establish an alternative process under which an applicant may submit other evidence to demonstrate U.S. citizenship.

Each state must take affirmative steps on an ongoing basis to ensure that only U.S. citizens are registered to vote, which shall include establishing a program to identify individuals who are not U.S. citizens using information supplied by certain sources.

Additionally, states must remove noncitizens from their official lists of eligible voters.

The bill allows for a private right of action against an election official who registers an applicant to vote in a federal election who fails to present documentary proof of U.S. citizenship.

The bill establishes criminal penalties for certain offenses, including registering an applicant to vote in a federal election who fails to present documentary proof of U.S. citizenship.



What is the SAVE Act?

Its stated goal is to make sure only U.S. citizens vote in federal elections. It has passed the House of Representatives multiple times since 2024, including most recently in February 2026, and is being debated in the Senate.

Voters would proof of citizenship in person before completing registration, like a passport or certified birth certificate.

Is noncitizen voting actually a problem?

Federal data shows that just 0.04% of voter verification cases flag as potential noncitizens, and even within that small group, many had already provided proof of citizenship when they registered. It's already the law (since 1996) including fines, imprisonment, and deportation.

How do most Americans register today?

Only 6% of voters currently register in person at an election office. Everyone else online, by mail, or at the SOS.

How would that change under the SAVE Act?

Every American, including people who have been registered for decades, would need to appear in person at an election office with qualifying documents. Online voter registration, which 42 states currently rely on, would be upended or eliminated. Mail registration would end entirely. **Voter registration drives would become functionally ineffective**, since they depend on reaching people at events and public spaces where no one carries a passport or birth certificate.

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What documents would actually qualify?

This surprises most people. A standard driver's license alone does not qualify in most states. A REAL ID alone does not qualify. A military ID alone does not qualify. A tribal ID alone does not qualify. Only five states currently issue enhanced driver's licenses that meet the bill's requirements on their own.

For most Americans, qualifying requires one of the following: a valid U.S. passport or passport card, a certified birth certificate paired with a photo ID, a naturalization certificate, or a Consular Report of Birth Abroad. If your name does not match across those documents, additional paperwork such as a marriage certificate would also be required.

The requirement applies any time a voter updates their registration, including after moving, changing their name, or switching political parties. Millions of already-registered Americans would need to comply, not just people registering for the first time.

Is this a modern poll tax?

The [24th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution](#), ratified in 1964, prohibits any fee as a condition of voting in federal elections. Poll taxes are **unconstitutional**.

U.S. passport \$65-165

Birth Certificate \$10 - \$50

Naturalization Certificate \$1,385.

This affects more Americans than you think, and not who you might expect.

- **Married women.**
- **Rural Americans.**
- **Young and first-time voters.** Voter registration drives; Frequent movers would need to re-present their documents every time they update their registration.
- **Low-income Americans.** Financial barriers and time off work.
- **Military members and Americans abroad.**

We already know what happens when states try this.

Case Studies: Kansas law blocked more valid voters than the few illegal voters; struck down in federal court. Arizona similar.

There is also a significant cost to the people who run our elections.

Election office workers intimidated; face criminal and civil consequences up to prison, even if that voter is a legitimate U.S. citizen.

Under the bill, most election offices are not currently equipped to perform.

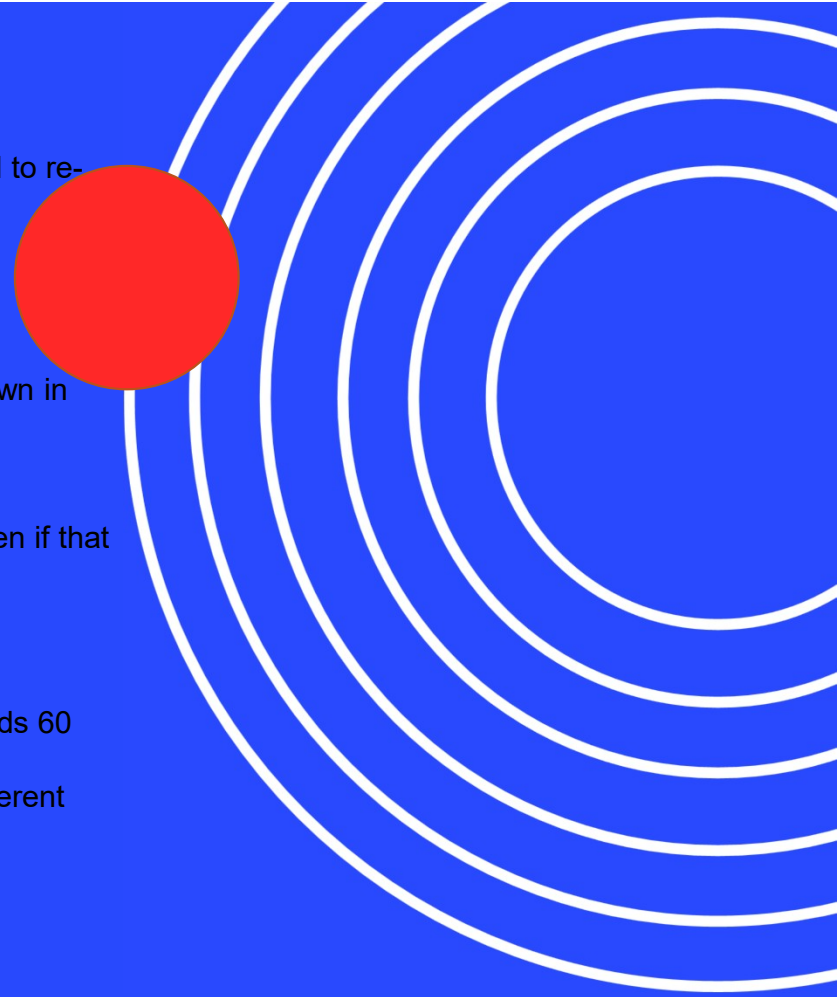
Where things stand right now.

As of March 18, 2026, the Senate is actively debating the SAVE America Act. The bill needs 60 votes to overcome a filibuster. Republicans hold 53 seats and would need at least seven Democratic votes, which have not materialized. They will try again and again; same & different ways.

OTHER ATTEMPTS: Michigan Joint House Bill B (2025)

Help people get their documents.

Contact your senators.





Appendix: Summary of Provisions in the SAVE, SAVE America, and MEGA Acts

Measure	SAVE Act	SAVE America Act	MEGA Act
Documentary proof of citizenship for voter registration and registration updates	X	X	X
Eliminates online and mail in voter registration	X	X	X
Verification of voter eligibility using with SAVE system, SSN Verification Service, and state agencies	X	X	X
Private right of action for individuals to sue election officials	X	X	X
Criminal penalties for election officials	X	X	X
ID required for absentee ballot request		X	X
Strict photo ID required to vote		X	X
Ends universal mail-in voting			X
Eliminates permanent absentee voter lists			X
Mail-in ballots must be received by Election night			X
States required to conduct monthly voter list purges			X
Ineligible voters from purges placed on publicly available list			X
Use of voter verifiable paper ballots for all federal elections			X
States create a statewide voter registration list			X
Bans ranked choice voting for federal elections			X
Federal funding tied to compliance, and certified by Attorney General			X

Suppression at a Glance

<https://www.vote.org/save-act/>



We Still Have the Power!

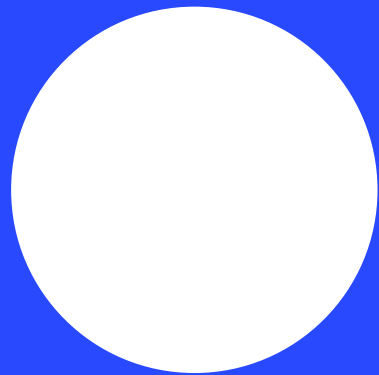
Strategies

- Knowledge is always POWER. Voter Education!
- Official Drop Boxes w/ Cameras
- Early Voting
- Get Postmarked INSIDE Post Office
- Track Ballot; Early Voting if not by weekend.
- Voting Rights Allies
 - Promote the Vote
 - Challenger Program
- Local Clerk Partner with Local Postmasters
- Partnerships with Local Clerks
 - Ballot Collection Authorization
- RideShare to Voting Sites



Q&A

YOUR WORK IS VITAL!!



Thanks for inviting me to speak.

