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Wayne County Takes a Stand Against Voter Suppression Ballot Initiative

Resolutions across Southeast Michigan highlight threats from the 'Michigan SAVE Act'

DETROIT - The Wayne County Board of Commissioners today passed a resolution 12-to-1, taking a stand against proof-of-citizenship mandates that would create more red tape for voters. A coalition of 36 organizations representing voting rights advocates, people with disabilities, voters with low incomes, voters of color, and faith communities signed a letter supporting the resolution and highlighting that these mandates could block many Southeast Michigan citizens from voting. With this resolution, Wayne County joins a growing list of local governments taking a stand against what advocates have termed the 'Michigan SAVE Act.'

The resolutions address a ballot proposal that would require voters to provide a birth certificate, passport, or other sensitive documents when registering to vote—eliminating the current option to register using only a driver's license. If approved, the measure would also require voters to present additional documentation when casting a ballot, whether in person or by absentee vote.

The proposal mirrors the [SAVE America Act](#): a national bill that passed the U.S. House of Representatives in February 2026. Republican Kim Markee [resigned from her position](#) as Waterford Township Clerk late last month, citing the SAVE Act in a statement to the Oakland Press as a potential source of unnecessary work and "way overkill."

On March 4, the out-of-state political action committee leading the petition drive [turned in 750,000](#) petition signatures after spending \$6 million on paid signature gatherers. The group needs 446,198 valid signatures to qualify the measure for the 2026 ballot.

Voters' rights groups are [sounding the alarm](#) on these show-your-papers mandates. According to a nonpartisan study, nearly 700,000 Michiganders lack or cannot easily access the documents required by the ballot proposal.

"During Women's History Month, Wayne County has a responsibility to honor the legacy of the women's suffrage movement by rejecting any policy that makes it harder for eligible voters to participate," said **Angela Davenport, Communications & Community Relations Director for the Voting Access For All Coalition**. "Women did not wait for permission to claim their voice. They organized, resisted and fought for the right to vote because they understood what was at stake. Today we are facing new barriers, like documentary proof of citizenship, that threaten to silence that same voice. We have a responsibility to protect what was fought for and ensure every person can access the ballot without unnecessary obstacles."

The documents required by these mandates can cost more than \$100—a burden that lies out of reach for many Wayne County residents.

“In Wayne County, 51% of households struggle to afford a basic budget,” said **Morghan Boydston, Senior Director of Client Success and Services at United Way for Southeastern Michigan**. “The families I work with every day must regularly choose between food and heating bills. Many of these voters can’t pull together the \$150 cost of a passport or take the time off work to update their documents.”

These mandates not only particularly harm voters with low incomes. They also disproportionately harm military and overseas voters, married women who changed their name, adopted voters, and voters with disabilities.

Michigan has a strong history of protecting the freedom to vote and ensuring that voting is safe and accessible for the over 7 million active registered voters in our state, including the passage of pro-voter ballot initiatives by Michigan voters in 2018 and 2022. Since then, voters across the state have enjoyed access to same-day registration, no-excuse absentee voting, and in-person early voting.

“Michigan voters across the political spectrum have made it very clear that they support elections that are secure, impartial, and accessible,” said **Alyson Grigsby, Education Programs Manager for Voters Not Politicians**. “That’s why they voted with overwhelming support of Proposals 18-3 and 22-2, which expanded opportunities for eligible Michigan voters to register and cast their ballots, and why we want to see that system continue to work and keep voting access in the hands of Michiganders.”

"The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization," said **Lynne Pierce, President of the League of Women Voters Grosse Pointe**. "We do not endorse or oppose political parties or candidates. Our mission is to empower voters. The united voices of the Wayne County Commissioners supporting local democracy sends a clear message to every voter in our county and every elected official in Lansing that our elections are safe and secure."

On January 21, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a [resolution](#) opposing the mandates and affirming its support for fair and free elections. [Detroit](#) and [Ypsilanti](#) each passed unanimous resolutions on February 17. [Kalamazoo County](#) advanced a similar resolution on March 17th.

“In America, voters choose their leaders; leaders do not get to choose their voters,” said **Ben Gardner, Senior Campaigns Manager at All Voting Is Local Action Michigan**. “The data is clear that, nationwide, proof of citizenship requirements, such as requiring a passport or birth certificate upon registering to vote or voting, would keep more than 21 million Americans from voting, and in Michigan, it could block up to 1.1 million voters. We are thankful to the Wayne Board of Commissioners for adopting this resolution and recognizing the importance of protecting Michigan voters from these show-your-papers laws, which will only cause headaches and additional red tape for voters and election administrators alike.”