

Fact Sheet: The “SAVE” Act (Documentary Proof of Citizenship to Register to Vote)

What is the “SAVE” Act?

- The so-called “SAVE” Act is a bill put forward in the U.S. Congress that would require citizens to **provide paperwork in addition to their sworn voter registration form** showing that the person is a U.S. citizen, or they would be stopped from registering and voting. For most people, that would mean providing a passport or a birth certificate to register to vote or update their registration.
- Voters currently register in almost every state by simply swearing or affirming in writing under penalty of perjury that the person is a citizen.
- The “SAVE” Act would also **purge eligible voters** from the rolls.

Why the “SAVE” Act is Bad for Voters:

- When Kansas and Arizona implemented documentary proof requirements, they **blocked tens of thousands of eligible American citizens** from registering.
- Recent studies show that around **ten percent of voting-eligible citizens—millions of Americans—do not have documents** to prove their citizenship. If people cannot vote unless they show hard-to-get and expensive documents in order to register, it makes it **harder for citizens to vote**.
- Those citizens are disproportionately likely to be young people or elderly people, but they **include Americans across all political parties and demographic groups**.
 - **Women who changed their name when they got married** are less likely to have updated documentary proof.
- Most people **would have to go to an election office** or mail a document weeks before they go to vote because voters in most states must register ahead of time.
- These paperwork requirements would **shut down online voter registration** and make mail registration much harder, because even when people have the documents they need, they often can't easily make and send in copies.
- Both privacy concerns and figuring out how to submit the documents make it less likely that people will finish registering.
- This rule would **shut down most community-based voter registration efforts**, which help voters at shopping centers, churches, campuses, and other public places where even people who have documents at home do not have them handy.

Why Our Elections Don't Need “SAVE”

- Excluding eligible citizens from voting because they don't have the listed paperwork **makes our elections less fair**.
- Voting by people who aren't U.S. citizens is incredibly **rare**, and when it happens it is often a **mistake**. The extremely harsh consequences of deportation and prison time that already exist for noncitizens are enough to make sure that **only citizens are voting** in state and federal elections.