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EXPLAINER

Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act

H.R. 22



- House Version:** [H.R. 22](#) by Rep. Chip Roy (R-Texas)
- Senate Version:** [S. 128](#) by Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah)
- Prior Action:** [Passed the House](#) almost entirely on party lines in 2024

Summary



The [Safeguard American Voter Eligibility \(SAVE\) Act](#) would impose stricter standards for proof of citizenship on the voter registration process—a position supported by [83 percent](#) of Americans. Under [current law](#), voters need only attest to their citizenship with a signature, and [Supreme Court precedent](#) blocks states from implementing stricter citizenship checks for federal elections. The SAVE Act would modify the existing signature-only statute to require presentation of citizenship documents in order to register. This new law would take effect immediately upon enactment and provide a private right of action to enforce the new standards.

Key Takeaways



Proof of citizenship helps build trust

- Requiring proof of citizenship to vote is a commonsense policy with broad bipartisan support. As America struggles to build trust in elections—with [support swaying](#) based upon partisan outcomes—finding solutions that help bolster trust and enjoy strong bipartisan support is paramount.

Citizenship verification must be workable in practice

- The SAVE Act needs substantial amendments to be workable in practice. As introduced, the bill requires states to make substantial updates to voter registration practices, changes the way voter data is collected and stored, and becomes effective for all voter registrations immediately upon enactment. In order to ensure the bill works as intended without needlessly burdening already overworked election clerks, the SAVE Act should be amended to include more realistic implementation deadlines, including an effective date of 180 days after enactment.

Existing databases should minimize the burden on voters

- The current version of the SAVE Act would require voters to present proof of citizenship—including original copies of birth certificates or other documentation—in person. These standards place substantial burdens on voters, who often do not have access to original documents and who may have already provided such information to other government agencies. The standards also interfere with online voter registration—a [key voter registration mechanism](#) across the country—and create yet another process for workers to implement at the polls on Election Day.
- The SAVE Act should follow in the footsteps of states like Arizona by allowing voters to submit their driver's license or state ID number with their application, thereby placing the burden on the state to confirm citizenship. Only if citizenship cannot be confirmed through existing government databases should voters be required to provide additional proof.