



Let Voters Vote!

Why Documentary Proof of Citizenship is Needless Voter Suppression

January 21, 2026





Let Voters Vote!

Panelists

Christopher Thomas
Former Michigan Director
of Elections

Melanie Macey
Promote the Vote
Policy & Government
Affairs Director

Valencia Richardson
Campaign Legal Center
Voting Rights Attorney

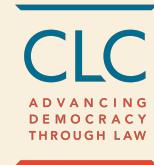


Agenda



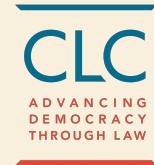
- Michigan Perspective on Citizen Voting
- DPOC Ballot Initiatives in Michigan
- SAVE Act and the National Perspective
- Questions and Discussion





Michigan Perspective on Citizen Voting





DPOC Ballot Initiatives in Michigan



What IS documentary proof of citizenship?

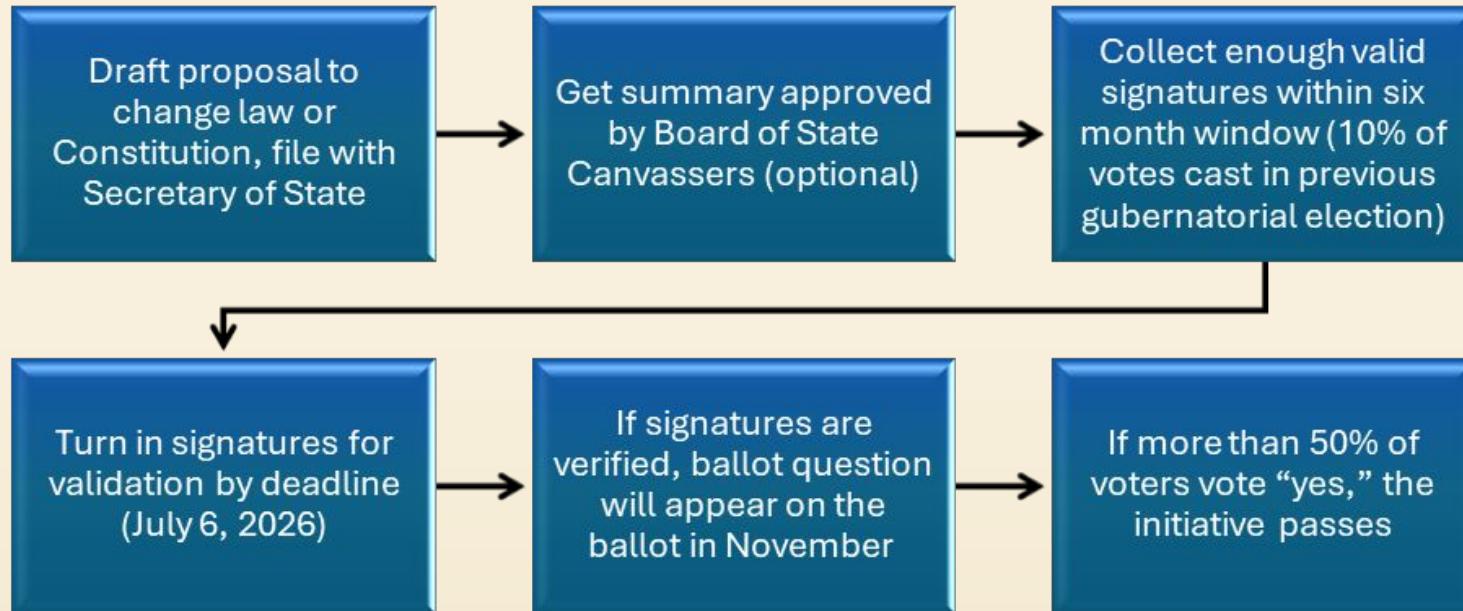
- Documentary Proof of Citizenship (DPOC) is the requirement to provide some document that proves one's citizenship
- Document examples....
 - U.S. passport
 - REAL I.D.? (not in Michigan)
 - Birth certificate? (name must match)



DPOC Ballot Initiatives in Michigan

- Two ballot proposals are circulating for signatures in Michigan.
- Both would modify the Michigan Constitution to **require documentary proof of U.S. citizenship (DPOC) to vote in Michigan elections.**
- Each ballot proposal will need to collect over 446,000 valid signatures to appear as a question to voters on the 2026 November ballot. Both could appear.

Constitutional Amendment Initiative Process



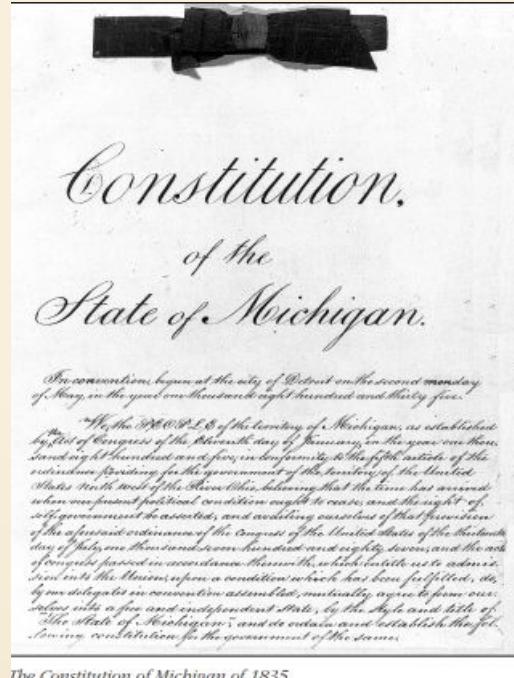
Where Do the Initiative Proposals Come From?



- Different groups coordinating the proposals
 - **Committee to Protect Voters Rights:** group seems formed for this purpose. Initiative similar to House Joint Resolution B that was introduced by Rep. Posthumus in early 2025 and never passed the Michigan House
 - **Americans for Citizen Voting - Michigan:** branch of a national group bringing similar proposals elsewhere. Introduced two different versions but only circulating the second one.

What Does It Mean for Michiganders?

- Both proposals would change the Michigan Constitution to require all registered voters to provide documentary proof of citizenship
- It would impact how people register for the first time, stay registered, and vote
- Changes would apply to already-registered, longtime voters as well as new registrants



The Constitution of Michigan of 1835.

What Exactly Is Proposed?



The proposed initiatives are very similar. In both cases, the following are true.

- **Requires accessing specific citizenship documents to register.** Applies to new registrations and updated registrations (a move is considered an updated registration)
- **Requires verified citizenship to cast a regular ballot.** If a voter's citizenship has not been verified, they are only eligible to vote a provisional ballot that will only be tabulated if the voter's citizenship is verified by the sixth day after the election.
- **Removes affidavit of identity option.**
- **Requires those applying for and voting an absentee ballot to provide an original or a copy of their photo ID or their driver's license number, state ID number, or the last four digits of their Social Security number.**

Proposal #1: Committee to Protect Voters' Rights



- Documents for DPOC not defined, leaving it up to the legislature to define later.
- Requires the Secretary of State to use an “ongoing systematic process” to verify the citizenship of all individuals in the voter file.
- Allows the Secretary of State, at any time, to conduct an “individualized review” of the citizenship status of any voter
- Provides for individuals who “establish a financial hardship in paying document fees” to obtain documentary proof of citizenship or photo ID at no cost.

Proposal #2:ACVM



- Requires the Secretary of State to create verification process, but leaves it undefined.
- Defines DPOC explicitly and references a process to provide other proof along with a sworn affidavit.
- Harsh criminal penalties for election officials for violations (including “providing material assistance to a non-citizen in attempting to register”)
- Requires the Secretary of State to remove an individual from the voter rolls “upon receipt of documentation or verified information” (including from “an individualized submission or investigation”) indicating that the individual is not a U.S. citizen.
- Applies to elections after November 2, 2027

Is the Proposals’ “Fix” Needed?



- No evidence of widespread non-citizen voting in Michigan
 - Secretary of State's office did a comprehensive review of the 2024 election to identify any voters who had submitted documents to the state indicating non-citizenship. 16 voters were identified out of 5.7 million votes cast. **This represents 0.00028% of all votes cast in the election.**
- **Systems are in place and improving all the time, like Secure Automatic Voter Registration.**

What Is the Proposals' Impact?



- Some eligible voters would be disenfranchised, largely more vulnerable populations:
 - **longtime voters born at home or out-of-state;**
 - **married women and others whose names have changed;**
 - **low-income voters;**
 - **rural voters, young people and new voters; and**
 - **college students**
- **Voter rights we just voted on will be rolled back.**

Bottom Line

- The proposed initiatives purport to address the spectre of non-citizens deciding our elections.
- This has been shown repeatedly not to be an issue in Michigan or anywhere else.
- Requiring DPOC will mean some eligible voters will be turned away. Extrapolating from other states, this will be tens of thousands of Michiganders unable to vote
- Implementing this system will be costly to taxpayers and burdensome (and threatening!) for election officials.





SAVE Act and the National Perspective



SAVE Act and the national perspective

- In most states, signing the affirmation of eligibility and providing identifying information like your date of birth, driver's license number, and address is all you need to register to vote.
- But in some states, voters must provide additional documentation to prove their U.S. citizenship before being registered to vote.
- As of May 1, 2025, legislatures in 24 states had introduced measures to require similar proof of citizenship for voter registration.
- Arizona has had additional documentary proof of citizenship (DPOC) requirements since the 2006 election cycle. Since 2023, Idaho, Louisiana, Montana, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Wyoming have all adopted some form of DPOC requirement.



SAVE Act and the federal perspective

- On April 10, 2025, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Safeguarding American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act (H.R. 22/S. 128).
- Among the SAVE Act's provisions are amendments to the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) that would require voters to provide documentary proof of U.S. citizenship (DPOC) to register for Federal elections.

SAVE Act and the federal perspective

- On March 24, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order (EO 14248) that attempts to achieve many of the same goals as the SAVE Act, including by directing the Election Assistance Commission (EAC), a bipartisan independent agency established by Congress, to add a DPOC requirement to the Federal Form used for voter registration.
- The President does not have independent legal authority to regulate elections. The U.S. Constitution reserves that power to Congress and the States.
- Several lawsuits have successfully blocked enforcement of the E.O.

SAVE Act and the federal perspective

- The **SAVE Act is not yet law** – to become effective, it would need to pass the U.S. Senate and be signed by the President.
- If the SAVE Act were to pass, the burden on voters and election officials would be significant, preventing millions of eligible voters from registering and subjecting election workers to criminal penalties if they fail to carry out the SAVE Act's requirements.

**The League of Women Voters
will lead questions to our
panelists**

