

Oppose HB1252 to Require Proof of Citizenship for Voting

A Costly Solution In Need of a Problem

We in Colorado recognized long ago that the right to vote should not depend on one's age, income or ability to buy a home.

Voting is the bedrock of our democracy: we should encourage every eligible voter to do so, not create additional and unnecessary obstacles. Requiring proof of citizenship to register to vote hinders Colorado citizens' efforts to responsibly participate in elections.

A Solution Without a Problem

Proof of citizenship requirements do not address any serious or widespread problem

Safeguards already exist to prevent non-citizens from registering to vote

- Voter registration forms already require voters to affirm their citizenship
- Providing materially false information during voter registration is already against the law
- Non-citizens who vote illegally risk 5 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine and could face immigration-related consequences such as deportation or removal.

The Citizenship Screening is Flawed and Will Subject Eligible Voters to Onerous Requirements

The databases on which the Secretary of State is relying will likely result in false matches due to varying timetables for updating and different standards for being maintained.

- The Motor Vehicle and Social Security Administration databases do not automatically update an individual's status once they become citizens, meaning the SOS could check that database and incorrectly identify someone as a non-citizen.
- The process for changing one's citizenship status with the Social Security database is arduous and burdensome, leading to further delays.
- In Georgia, where this bill was first implemented, thousands of people were wrongfully identified as non-citizens.

Proof of Citizenship Requirements Disenfranchise Eligible Voters

While it may seem benign to require people to present proof of citizenship if their registrations are flagged, in fact, many eligible voters do not have this documentation. Requiring proof of citizenship will create barriers for eligible voters, particularly for many low-income citizens, seniors, young people, minorities, and people with disabilities.

- For those who do not have documents to prove citizenship, it is a significant burden to obtain the necessary back-up documentation, take time off during business hours, find transportation to offices that issue the documents and find the funds for application fees and transportation.

By passing burdensome laws that address a non-existent problem, elected officials risk further eroding the public's faith in their ability to govern with the interests of the voters in mind.

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America Votes · Bell Policy Center - Colorado AFL-CIO - Colorado Center on Law & Policy
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless - Colorado Common Cause · Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition
Colorado Education Association - Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition - Colorado Progressive Coalition · Democracia, Inc
League of Women Voters of Colorado - Lutheran Advocacy Ministry- CO - Mi Familia Vota - New Era Colorado
One Colorado - Planned Parenthood Votes Colorado - Project Vote – SEIU, Local 105
The Legal Center for People with Disabilities and Older People – United Food & Commercial Workers, Local 7
Women's Lobby of Colorado