

HOUSE BILL 454

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EMERGENCY BILL

6lr1113

By: **Delegates Hornberger, Adams, Anderson, Arentz, Baker, Beauchamp, Bouchat, Buckel, Ciliberti, Ghrist, Griffith, Hartman, Hinebaugh, Howard, Hutchinson, Jacobs, Kipke, R. Long, Mangione, McComas, Miller, T. Morgan, Nkongolo, Pippy, Reilly, Rose, Schmidt, Tomlinson, Valentine, and Wivell**

Introduced and read first time: January 23, 2026

Assigned to: Government, Labor, and Elections

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Election Law – Voter Registration Eligibility – U.S. Citizenship Verification**
3 **(SAVE Our Elections Act of 2026)**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the State Administrator of Elections to enroll the State in the
5 federal Systematic Alien Verification of Entitlement (SAVE) Program for a certain
6 purpose; requiring the State Board of Elections to establish a process to verify the
7 U.S. citizenship of certain individuals applying to or who have registered to vote in
8 the State; requiring the State Board to establish a certain appeal process for certain
9 individuals who dispute a certain report that the individual lacks U.S. citizenship;
10 and generally relating to verification of U.S. citizenship for voter registration.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
12 Article – Election Law
13 Section 1–101(a), 3–101(a), 3–102(a), and 3–504(b)(1)
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

16 BY adding to
17 Article – Election Law
18 Section 1–101(nn–1) and 3–603
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

21 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
22 Article – Election Law
23 Section 3–101(c), 3–301, 3–305(e), 3–306(e), and 3–504(a)
24 Annotated Code of Maryland

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Election Law

1–101.

(a) In this article the following words have the meanings indicated unless a different meaning is clearly intended from the context.

(NN–1) “SAVE PROGRAM” MEANS THE FEDERAL SYSTEMATIC ALIEN VERIFICATION OF ENTITLEMENT (SAVE) PROGRAM OPERATED BY THE U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES IN THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY.

3–101.

(a) There shall be a statewide voter registration list.

(c) The State Administrator shall:

(1) define, maintain, and administer the statewide voter registration list;

(2) with the local boards, ensure the currency and accuracy of each individual voter’s registration record;

(3) instruct the local boards on:

(i) processing voter registration applications and name and address changes;

(ii) entering voter registration information into the statewide voter registration list; and

(iii) removing from the statewide voter registration list information about voters who are no longer eligible to be registered voters; [and]

(4) subject to relevant federal law and to regulations adopted by the State Board, establish and conduct a program to identify voters who have changed their addresses; **AND**

(5) ENROLL THE STATE IN THE SAVE PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF VERIFYING THE U.S. CITIZENSHIP OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE APPLIED TO

1 REGISTER TO VOTE OR HAVE REGISTERED TO VOTE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
2 PROVISIONS OF THIS TITLE.

3 3-102.

4 (a) (1) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this section, an individual may
5 become registered to vote if the individual:

6 (i) is a citizen of the United States;

7 (ii) is at least 16 years old;

8 (iii) is a resident of the State as of the day the individual seeks to
9 register; and

10 (iv) registers pursuant to this title.

11 (2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(ii) of this subsection, an individual
12 under the age of 18 years:

13 (i) may vote in a primary election in which candidates are
14 nominated for a general or special election that will occur when the individual is at least
15 18 years old; and

16 (ii) may not vote in any other election.

17 3-301.

18 (a) When a voter registration application is received by a local board, the local
19 board shall:

20 (1) if the applicant resides in the county of the local board, determine
21 whether the applicant is qualified to become a registered voter, **INCLUDING BY**
22 **VERIFYING THE U.S. CITIZENSHIP OF THE APPLICANT THROUGH THE SAVE**
23 **PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE STATE BOARD;** or

24 (2) if the applicant resides in a different county in the State, immediately
25 forward the application to the proper county.

26 (b) The information contained in the voter registration application for a qualified
27 applicant shall be electronically entered into the statewide voter registration list on an
28 expedited basis at the time voter registration information is provided to the local board and
29 shall be assigned to the county in which the applicant resides unless registration is closed
30 pursuant to § 3-302 of this subtitle.

31 (c) (1) The election director in the county where an applicant resides shall
32 send a voter acknowledgment notice, in a format prescribed by the State Board, to each

1 applicant informing the applicant whether he or she is qualified to become registered, and,
2 if not qualified, the reasons why.

3 (2) (i) A voter notification card sent to a qualified applicant may serve
4 as a voter acknowledgment notice.

5 (ii) 1. The voter notification card shall contain the name and
6 address of the voter, the date of issue, and the district or ward and precinct of the voter.

7 2. The card is evidence that the individual to whom it is
8 issued is a registered voter on the date appearing on the card.

9 3. The election director shall issue a replacement card on
10 request of the voter and a new card when a relevant change is made in the voter's
11 registration record if the voter continues to reside in the county.

12 3-305.

13 (e) (1) The State Board shall adopt regulations and procedures in accordance
14 with the requirements of this section for the administration of voter registration during
15 early voting.

16 (2) **THE REGULATIONS REQUIRED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS**
17 **SUBSECTION SHALL INCLUDE:**

18 (I) **A PROCESS TO VERIFY AN APPLICANT'S U.S. CITIZENSHIP**
19 **THROUGH THE SAVE PROGRAM; AND**

20 (II) **AN APPEAL PROCESS TO DISPUTE REPORTS OF THE SAVE**
21 **PROGRAM THAT AN INDIVIDUAL LACKS U.S. CITIZENSHIP IN ACCORDANCE WITH §**
22 **3-603 OF THIS TITLE.**

23 3-306.

24 (e) (1) The State Board shall adopt regulations and procedures in accordance
25 with the requirements of this section for the administration of voter registration on election
26 day.

27 (2) **THE REGULATIONS UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION**
28 **SHALL INCLUDE:**

29 (I) **A PROCESS TO VERIFY AN APPLICANT'S U.S. CITIZENSHIP**
30 **THROUGH THE SAVE PROGRAM; AND**

1 **(II) AN APPEAL PROCESS TO DISPUTE REPORTS OF THE SAVE**
2 **PROGRAM THAT AN INDIVIDUAL LACKS U.S. CITIZENSHIP IN ACCORDANCE WITH §**
3 **3-603 OF THIS TITLE.**

4 3-504.

5 (a) (1) (i) Information from the agencies specified in this paragraph shall
6 be reported to the State Administrator in a format and at times prescribed by the State
7 Board.

8 (ii) The Maryland Department of Health shall report the names and
9 residence addresses (if known) of all individuals at least 16 years of age reported deceased
10 within the State since the date of the last report.

11 (iii) Each month, the clerk of the circuit court for each county and the
12 administrative clerk for each District Court shall report the names and addresses of all
13 individuals convicted, in the respective court, of a felony and sentenced to imprisonment
14 with commitment papers.

15 (iv) The clerk of the circuit court for each county shall report the
16 former and present names and residence addresses (if known) of all individuals whose
17 names have been changed by decree or order of the court since the date of the last report.

18 (2) The State Administrator shall make arrangements with the clerk of the
19 United States District Court for the District of Maryland to receive reports of names and
20 addresses, if available, of individuals convicted of a felony in that court and sentenced to
21 imprisonment with commitment papers.

22 (3) The State Administrator shall make arrangements with the United
23 States Social Security Administration or an entity that receives information from the Social
24 Security Administration and is approved by the State Administrator to receive reports of
25 names and addresses, if available, of all Maryland residents at least 16 years of age who
26 are reported deceased.

27 **(4) THE STATE ADMINISTRATOR SHALL MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH**
28 **U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES TO RECEIVE REPORTS OF NAMES**
29 **OF MARYLAND RESIDENTS THAT HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE SAVE PROGRAM**
30 **FOR VERIFICATION OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP FOR THE PURPOSE OF VOTER**
31 **REGISTRATION IN THE STATE.**

32 (b) (1) The State Administrator shall transmit to the appropriate local board
33 information gathered pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

34 **3-603.**

1 **(A) IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE STATE**
2 **BOARD, AN INDIVIDUAL WHO DISPUTES A REPORT OF THE SAVE PROGRAM THAT**
3 **THE INDIVIDUAL LACKS U.S. CITIZENSHIP MAY FILE AN APPEAL WITH THE STATE**
4 **BOARD.**

5 **(B) WHENEVER A REPORT IS RECEIVED FROM THE SAVE PROGRAM UNDER**
6 **§ 3-504(A)(4) OF THIS TITLE WITH THE NAME OF AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS APPLIED**
7 **TO REGISTER OR REGISTERED TO VOTE BUT IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN, THE**
8 **APPROPRIATE ELECTION DIRECTOR SHALL MAIL TO THE ADDRESS SHOWN ON THE**
9 **VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION OR STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION LIST, BY**
10 **REGULAR U.S. MAIL, A NOTICE OF INELIGIBILITY STATING:**

11 **(1) THE INDIVIDUAL IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN AS REPORTED BY THE**
12 **SAVE PROGRAM;**

13 **(2) THE INDIVIDUAL IS INELIGIBLE TO REGISTER TO VOTE UNDER §**
14 **3-102 OF THIS TITLE; AND**

15 **(3) UNLESS THE INDIVIDUAL APPEALS THE SAVE PROGRAM REPORT**
16 **OF LACK OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (C) OF THIS**
17 **SECTION:**

18 **(I) THE INDIVIDUAL'S VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION IS**
19 **REJECTED; OR**

20 **(II) THE INDIVIDUAL WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE STATEWIDE**
21 **VOTER REGISTRATION LIST.**

22 **(C) AN INDIVIDUAL WHO RECEIVES A NOTICE OF INELIGIBILITY UNDER**
23 **SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION MAY:**

24 **(1) FILE AN APPEAL TO THE REFUSAL TO REGISTER OR THE REMOVAL**
25 **FROM THE STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION LIST WITH THE STATE BOARD; AND**

26 **(2) PROVIDE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE SATISFACTORY TO THE**
27 **STATE BOARD OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP.**

28 **(D) (1) IF THE INDIVIDUAL FILES A TIMELY APPEAL UNDER SUBSECTION**
29 **(C) OF THIS SECTION, THE STATE ADMINISTRATOR MAY, AFTER CONSIDERATION OF**
30 **THE DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE PROVIDED, DIRECT AN ELECTION DIRECTOR TO:**

31 **(I) ADD THE INDIVIDUAL TO THE STATEWIDE VOTER**
32 **REGISTRATION LIST;**

1 **(II) TERMINATE THE REMOVAL PROCESS AND RETAIN THE**
2 **INDIVIDUAL ON THE STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION LIST; OR**

3 **(III) REFER THE MATTER TO THE LOCAL BOARD FOR A HEARING**
4 **TO DETERMINE THE INDIVIDUAL'S U.S. CITIZENSHIP.**

5 **(2) IF AN INDIVIDUAL WHO RECEIVES A NOTICE OF INELIGIBILITY**
6 **UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION FAILS TO FILE TIMELY AN APPEAL, THE**
7 **ELECTION DIRECTOR SHALL:**

8 **(I) REJECT THE INDIVIDUAL'S VOTER REGISTRATION**
9 **APPLICATION; OR**

10 **(II) CANCEL THE INDIVIDUAL'S VOTER REGISTRATION AND**
11 **REMOVE THE INDIVIDUAL FROM THE STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION LIST.**

12 **(E) THE STATE BOARD SHALL ADOPT REGULATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH**
13 **THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SECTION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN APPEAL**
14 **PROCESS FOR DISPUTES OF A REPORT OF THE SAVE PROGRAM THAT THE**
15 **INDIVIDUAL LACKS U.S. CITIZENSHIP.**

16 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act is an emergency
17 measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety, has
18 been passed by a yea and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to
19 each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from the date it is
20 enacted.