

Testimony on HB0454

Election Law - Voter Registration Eligibility - U.S. Citizenship Verification (SAVE Our Elections Act of 2026)

Government, Labor, and Elections Committee

Position: UNFavorable

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HB0454 is the “show your papers” requirement in order to vote. It’s really about making it harder for some people to vote by creating “...**barriers to voting**, particularly for groups more likely to face documentation challenges, such as people of color, the elderly, and those who have changed their names due to marriage”, says Common Cause Maryland.

Voters will need to show their passport or birth certificate to prove they are a citizen so they can exercise their right to vote. “Show your papers” is voter suppression, plain and simple.

According to the Brennan Center, “Half of Americans don’t have a passport, others don’t have their birth certificates, and the names of married women who took their husband’s last name and transgender Americans would not match their birth certificates.”

I’m one of those people. I took my husband’s name when we married. After 45 years of being married and longer as a registered Maryland voter, I’ll have to show my papers to be eligible to vote? For every election? That’s crazy!

HB0454 will have some Maryland voters jumping hurdles to get these papers to prove their US citizenship so they can exercise their right to vote. The likely probability is that many will be unable to get the required documentation for a variety of reasons. This leaves the aforementioned groups of currently eligible voters disenfranchised from the electoral process.

Maryland relies heavily on on-line and mail registration systems. We trust the State Board of Elections and the local Boards of Elections to properly administer voter registration. We think its working well to ensure voter eligibility. The system ain’t broke. So, what are we trying to fix? When did the current process of Maryland voter registration and ensuring only eligible voters participate in our elections, become a problem that would require voters to “show their papers” in order to vote?

We request an **UNFAVORABLE** Report for HB0454. Thank you.