



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

Board of Supervisors

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June 24, 2025

The Honorable Alex Padilla
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Opposition to the Federal SAVE Act (H.R. 22 / S. 128)

Dear Senator Padilla,

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors and the Office of the Clerk/Recorder/Registrar of Voters write today in strong opposition to the proposed Safeguarding American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, currently under consideration at the federal level.

Despite its name, the SAVE Act would impose significant new restrictions on voter registration processes and shift the burden of proof of citizenship onto individuals and local election offices—despite the fact that non-citizens are already prohibited from voting in federal and California elections under existing law.

This legislation would require every voter—newly registering or updating their registration—to present documentary proof of U.S. citizenship. Acceptable documents would likely include a birth certificate, U.S. passport, or naturalization papers. The mandate would apply retroactively to all voters whose citizenship status cannot be confirmed in existing databases, regardless of how long they have been registered.

Such a mandate, if enacted, would result in a significant unfunded burden on local elections offices. Mendocino County has 53,946 registered voters. In 2024, our Elections Office processed 11,993 new registrations or re-registrations. As of May 2025, we have already processed over 4,000 for the current year.

Each affected voter would need to be contacted individually—likely through multiple rounds of mailed notices—at an estimated cost of \$34.40 per registrant interaction, based on current staff rates. The cumulative cost of implementing these new requirements could amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars in a single election cycle. In addition, we anticipate needing to hire at least one full-time Staff Assistant II to manage the additional workload, with an estimated annual cost of \$80,000 to \$85,000 including benefits.

Importantly, no federal funding is currently proposed to help counties comply with these burdensome requirements. Without such funding, these costs would fall to local governments already struggling with staffing shortages and constrained budgets.

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We are also deeply concerned about the provision that would expose local election officials to civil and criminal liability for any failure to fully comply with the SAVE Act's requirements. This creates a chilling effect on our ability to efficiently and confidently administer elections at the local level.

We stand with California Secretary of State Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D., who has expressed grave concerns about the SAVE Act, stating that it would "make it harder for all eligible voters to cast their votes and participate in our democracy" and would reverse decades of progress toward broadening access to the ballot.

We urge the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and all levels of government to join us in opposing this unfunded mandate, which would compromise both voter access and election administration across Mendocino County and beyond.

Sincerely,



John Haschak, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

CC: The Honorable Adam B. Schiff, Senator from California
The Honorable Jared Huffman, Representative from California