



**Statement for Celina Stewart, Chief Executive Officer
League of Women Voters of the United States
US Senate**

**Spotlight Hearing on Protecting the Future of American Democracy: An Examination
of Trump and Partisan Attacks on Voting and Elections
May 14, 2025**

Ranking member Padilla, members of the Democratic caucus, and the US Senate, thank you for holding this important spotlight hearing to discuss the landscape of attacks on voting across our country and how we can work together to protect the future of our democracy. My name is Celina Stewart, and I am the Chief Executive Officer at the League of Women Voters of the United States. The League is a 105 year-old federated organization with over 750 chapters and more than 1 million members and supporters across the country. For decades, the League has fought to center public policy on voting access and election administration around the voters' experience, including the ability to register to vote and access the ballot box.

As one of the longest-running and largest, nonpartisan, volunteer driven voter registration organizations in the nation, the League of Women Voters strongly opposes attempts to add documentary proof of citizenship to the voter registration process, which is what the recent Executive Order on the "integrity of American Elections" and the *Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act* does. The SAVE Act would drastically alter the *National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA)* – a landmark piece of legislation the League played a large role in drafting, passing and implementing – by adding provisions that will require that every eligible voter provide documentary proof of citizenship, like a passport or birth certificate, to register to vote, even though voters in every state are already required to affirm or verify their citizenship status when registering and voting. Additionally, the citizenship documentation would need to be submitted in person to election officials.

Every eligible voter – particularly rural voters, voters of color, married women who have changed their last names, and other voters who have been historically marginalized who already face obstacles in accessing the ballot box – could be unnecessarily burdened by the SAVE Act at some point when they update or change their voter registration information.



What might this look like in practice? Back in March, New Hampshire held its first local elections since the state adopted a documentary-proof-of-citizenship requirement to register to vote, and the result was chaos. One woman recounted an hours-long saga of retrieving different documents to try to register. Another had to return three times because her name on her birth certificate did not match her marriage license. Even in the majority of states that don't have same-day voter registration like New Hampshire, having to dig up documents and go back and forth from office-to-office amounts to a poll tax, one that will disproportionately harm women.

Nearly 80% of married women – more than 69 million potentially-eligible women voters -- adopt their partner's surname. It is because of that reality that I would go so far as to say that, in the League's 105-year history, the SAVE Act may be the most brazen attack on American women's voting rights that we have ever seen. This bill's excessive documentation requirements – specifically, the idea that the name on their ID must match the name on a birth certificate or passport -- threatens every single one of them and their ability to register to vote. I think anyone, no matter how they lean politically, would agree: This is not how our democracy should work.

In 2024 the League supported well over 400,000 people in registering to vote or updating their voter registration through in-person field voter registration events. Our leagues registered more than 70,000 young people at schools and colleges across the country; we also registered more than 90,000 new citizens at naturalization ceremonies. But the registration numbers are really only part of the story here. The League actually reached more than 163,000 young people and over 130,000 new citizens and their friends and families through these events, letting them know that their voices are needed and wanted in our democracy.

All of this work would change if the SAVE Act is implemented, and voters – and our country -- would suffer.

We know that this legislation is based on misinformation and fearmongering rather than facts, as there is no evidence of widespread non-citizen voter registration or voting in state and federal elections. Time and time again, the League has fought similar policies at the federal and state levels through public education, advocacy and litigation.

At the end of the day, we will continue to fight to protect the voting rights of all eligible Americans and ensure that every voice is heard in our elections – and for that reason, we strongly oppose the SAVE Act and urge you to do so as well.



Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation. I can take your questions today and I look forward to finding ways that the League of Women Voters can continue working with you on this important issue moving forward.
