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**CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF  
CLERKS AND ELECTION OFFICIALS**

**JESSE SALINAS, PRESIDENT**

Yolo County Assessor/Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters  
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April 22, 2025

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

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

RE: H.R. 22, Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act – LETTER OF CONCERN

**ELECTED AREA CHAIRS:**

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Southern Area  
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KRISTIN CONNELLY  
Bay Area  
Contra Costa County

OLIVIA HALE  
Central Area  
San Joaquin County

Dear Senator McConnell and Senator Padilla,

The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) supports and recognizes the principle that citizenship is a requirement for voter registration and voting. As sworn elections officials, CACEO members are dedicated to upholding the law while ensuring that every eligible voter—regardless of personal circumstances, profession, or political affiliation—is welcomed into the democratic process. CACEO is concerned that key provisions of the SAVE Act (Roy-R-TX), if enacted in its current form, risks disenfranchising thousands of eligible California citizens, significantly increases the cost of election administration at the local level, and may impose criminal penalties on officials who are simply fulfilling their legal duties.

**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES**

\*\*voting member

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**The SAVE Act risks disenfranchising thousands of eligible California citizens.**

The SAVE Act, as currently written, requires voters to appear in person at an elections office to present documentary proof of citizenship when submitting their affidavits of registration—either by the close of registration or at the time they use same-day registration. This requirement could pose significant barriers for thousands of Californians, including more than 165,000 military and overseas voters, an estimated 187,000 unhoused individuals, and many of the 4.1 million voters with disabilities who may be homebound. Additionally, married women, racial minorities, elderly individuals, and young voters could face unique challenges in obtaining and presenting the necessary documentation, which may further discourage updates to registration and disenfranchise those who are otherwise eligible.

The impact could be particularly severe given how voter registration currently functions in California. Statewide, election officials processed over 4.7 million

registration applications from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in 2024, with thousands processed monthly. In March 2025, for example, counties received around 408,000 registration applications from the DMV, sometimes without citizens realizing that their registration had been updated. The Act could leave thousands of eligible voters unaware they must appear at the elections office to provide proof of citizenship, and potentially after every DMV transaction. During the November 2024 election, over 2.5 million Californians voted in person, with nearly 394,000 using same-day registration. If the SAVE Act passes as written, it risks creating widespread confusion at the polls, overwhelming poll workers, and discouraging in-person voting due to long wait times and uncertainty about documentation requirements.

**The SAVE Act will significantly increase the cost of election administration at the local level.**

Adding documentary proof of citizenship to list maintenance responsibilities will require additional resources. Counties add new registrants, update existing registrations, and disqualify voters due to felony incarceration, death, or court-ordered conservatorship on a daily basis. A single California county may receive hundreds or thousands of registration updates per day from the DMV, the United States Postal Service, public agencies, and other sources. To ensure that all eligible citizens can maintain an active registration status, processing hundreds or thousands of in person transactions per day will require added time, people, and space that counties might not have.

Many California counties must make substantial budget cuts in the upcoming fiscal year (which includes budgetary plans for the June 2026 statewide primary election), leaving CACEO members wondering how they could carry out the Act's provisions if it becomes law. Our members anticipate increases in printing and postage costs due to required educational literature and voter notifications and may need to host special events to accommodate the large numbers of citizens attempting to appear in person to prove their citizenship status. Staffing, printing, postage, and voter education costs could add up to millions of additional taxpayer dollars statewide per year, with no option for reimbursement for counties.

**The SAVE Act may impose criminal penalties on officials who are simply fulfilling their legal duties.**

Though rare, the SAVE Act makes no exceptions for administrative errors, exposing elections officials, including poll workers, to criminal prosecution even when noncitizens are added to the voter roll by mistake. Because the SAVE Act allots little to no time to implement a large scale program, limited staff and resources could cause delays in identifying improper registrations and result in penalties for officials who are otherwise complying with the law. Additionally, the SAVE Act's provision allowing private citizens to sue officials they believe are not fulfilling their duties could lead to excessive litigation, diverting critical resources and increasing the risk of errors that negatively impact the voter experience.

CACEO urges you to please keep these concerns in mind as you deliberate and eventually cast your vote for the SAVE Act. As always, we will follow all laws passed by Congress and the California State Legislature and can provide further feedback based on our experience administering elections in California. If you have any questions or need additional information from CACEO or its members, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Jesse Salinas  
CACEO President  
[jesse.salinas@yolocounty.gov](mailto:jesse.salinas@yolocounty.gov)