

Proposed Resolution: Decline to Sign Proof of Citizenship Ballot Initiatives

Whereas Michigan already has laws to protect our elections and ensure that only citizens vote – such as a Constitutional Amendment requiring a photo ID to vote and Secure Automatic Voter Registration ensuring that only citizens are registered to vote;

Whereas HJR B, a resolution to require proof of citizenship (passport, birth certificate, naturalization papers) to vote in Michigan, was introduced in the Michigan House on January 29, 2025, but failed to pass;

Whereas, in response to the failed HJR B, anti-voter lawmakers and federal SAVE act supporters introduced two ballot initiatives to restrict the ability of eligible American citizens to register to vote with oppressive new identification requirements. One initiative (Committee to Protect Voters' Rights) would require proof of citizenship (passport, birth certificate, naturalization papers) to register to vote; eliminate the affidavit alternative for those without a photo ID when voting; require photo ID, driver's license or partial SSN to vote with absentee ballot; require SOS to review voter rolls to verify citizenship and remove those without proper documentation; prohibit counting a ballot unless documentation provided within 6 days after election; and provide hardship program to obtain documents at state expense. The second initiative (Americans for Citizens Voting) would require the SOS to review voter rolls to verify citizenship and remove those without proper documentation; require documentary proof of citizenship for new registrations; require photo ID, driver's license or partial SSN to vote absentee; prohibit counting ballots from voters without photo ID or citizenship documents unless provided within 6 days of election; provide free documents for voters with financial hardship; and subject violators (clerks and election workers) to civil and criminal penalties for violations;

Whereas the Michigan State Board of Canvassers has approved the 100 word petition summaries from the Committee to Protect Voters Rights and from the Americans for Citizens Voting. Both groups – acting separately or perhaps uniting into one organization – will begin to collect voters' signatures in order to put these initiative on the November 2026 ballot for approval by Michigan voters;

Whereas these initiatives are substantially similar in terms of the requirement for all voters to provide proof of citizenship in order to register to vote and both initiatives will have detrimental impacts on voting rights in Michigan, such as:

- Unnecessary – it is already against the law for non-citizens to vote in Michigan
- It will add costly red tape, create chaos, and burden clerks and election personnel from the local level all the way up to the Secretary of State.
- It will create a poll tax by asking people to incur expenses in order to provide proof of citizenship
- It will rewrite parts of Michigan's constitution and voting rights that voters overwhelmingly approved in 2018 and 2022
- It will disenfranchise millions of voters including women and others who have changed names, people without passports or ready access to birth certificates, unhoused people, military, people living overseas, the elderly, persons living in rural areas, students, Native Americans, young people, and the poor.

- It will chill absentee voting by adding new identification requirements every time a person votes with an absentee ballot (undoing much of the provisions of the permanent absent voter list adopted in 2022);

Whereas the real intent behind both of these initiatives is to suppress voting and voter registration. The history in jurisdictions that have adopted “proof of citizenship” laws has demonstrated this outcome. For example, after Kansas enacted such a bill in 2011, 12% (31,000) of otherwise-eligible new voter registrants had their registration blocked because they couldn’t satisfy the law’s requirements; the law was subsequently declared an unconstitutional burden on voting rights by a federal court and federal appeals court (US Supreme Court declined to hear) and has not been enforced since 2018;

Whereas these “proof of citizenship” initiatives have a good chance of passing once they are on the ballot, so the best way to defeat them is to make sure the petitions fall short of the number of signatures needed to get them on the ballot in the first place;

Now, therefore, be it:

Resolved, the Houghton County Democratic Party is opposed to the ballot initiatives presented by the Committee to Protect Voters Rights and the Americans for Citizens Voting (or any new name that might come from a joinder of these two organizations) and encourages Michigan voters to decline to sign these petitions.

Dated: _____