

Committee on House Administration
Written Testimony – Make Elections Great Again

February 10, 2026
Representative Ann M. Bollin
Chair of House Appropriations
District 49, State of Michigan

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on what is referred to as the MEGA Act. It is an honor to present before you and I look forward to your thoughtful consideration.

I first want to begin with providing you with my background to give you a perspective of where I am coming from. I believe I bring a unique perspective based on my experience of administering elections as a local clerk for close to 20 years and my tenure as a legislator living through the disruption, division, distrust and still debated 2020 election as the House Chair of Elections and Ethics immediately following the election.

In Michigan, elections are administered at the local level by more than 1600 local clerks. I served in a community that would be considered a ‘small, large’ community. Regardless, the standards should be the same and the laws are intended to be followed. While it brings challenges, voters have more trust in their local officials than their state or federal electeds. Michigan was ONCE known for its robust election laws that provided the necessary checks and balances leading to public confidence in the results. Michigan election law closely followed federal law which eased confusion for both voters and election administrators. With Michigan’s passage of two constitutional amendments brought forth by citizen petitions, we have seen the safeguards and checks and balances removed or ignored for the sake of convenience.

Our country is at a crossroads. Public trust is at an all-time low. Confidence in our elections is being questioned. We are living in a post-2020 divisive political climate due to the disruptions to our voting processes under the guise of COVID-19 and forcing the continued debate on what the best procedures are to ensure it is easy to vote and hard to cheat.

That is why the provisions under this Act are so important. This Act is not about federalizing our elections. It is about ensuring every ELIGIBLE VOTER CAN VOTE FREELY, SECRETLY, INDEPENDANTLY AND SECURELY. This is not rocket science. It should not be difficult to reach that goal if that is truly what the goal is.

I won’t get into a debate of the issues leading up to and greatly impacting the dismay with the 2020 election, but I do think it is important to recognize some of the reasons for the chaos that followed. Each state has the authority to determine the time, place and manner of elections while there are also federal laws that must be followed for a federal election. Media started reporting based on exit interviews, percent of voter turnout versus number of

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registered voters versus number of active registered voters. Compound this with different laws for mail-in ballots, provisional ballots, early voting, etc. and you can see why we have been on a high-speed collision course of confusion driven by sound bites rather than sound policy.

History shows that this can be a pivoting moment for our great nation to come together to fight for fair and free elections for all U.S. citizens.

It has been done before. More than once. In 1993, the NVRA was established to enhance voting opportunities for every American.

In the aftermath of the hanging chads and the controversies of the 2000 presidential election, America came together in strong bipartisan fashion and adopted the Help America Vote Act also known as HAVA in part because it was revealed that the U.S. lacked consistent, reliable, and modern election administration practices. It was an attempt to restore public confidence, and it established three consistent and important elements to restore confidence in our elections requiring each state to establish a statewide centralized voter registration database, upgrade voting systems for electronic tabulation, and providing accessible voting equipment.

Washington saw this as an opportunity to come together – What I would call a reset.

Fast forward to today – I believe this is where we are again. Every one of us should set politics aside and come together for the American people. The people we all represent. We should all want to restore public trust and confidence in our elections. AND that is exactly what the Make Elections Great Again Act will do.

We **have come together** for NVRA, HAVA, the MOVE ACT, UOCAVA – **we can come together again** to fine tune these for today’s modern times and to enhance election integrity and restore public trust and confidence.

I understand election integrity is a broad divisive term that incites prejudices – If you are for it, you are labeled a MAGA or an election denier – if you are not – you are labeled with DTDS.

This is not a partisan issue. It is an opportunity to let the American people know we are listening, to get back to the basics and lead this country back to its greatness by establishing some common ground instead of what seems to be more like an adolescent boys’ game of dodge ball.

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Fair and secure elections start and stop with a solid voter roll. Working together to establish NEW baseline federal standards and acknowledging the resources needed can be instrumental to moving us all forward.

Let's start with U.S. citizens only. The American public is resoundingly in support of this – 83% support this **and** photo id to register.

Having a robust and thorough check at the beginning of the process allows for a fluent voter roll and efficiency during an election.

Requiring Photo ID for Voting

Requiring photo identification to cast a ballot is a commonsense step that aligns with everyday life. Americans show ID to buy cough medicine, board a plane, open a bank account, or pick up groceries. Presenting identification at the polls strengthens confidence that each ballot is tied to an eligible voter. It PROTECTS THE VOTER.

States can implement voter ID requirements while ensuring access. Provisional ballot processes, outreach, and free state issued identification cards can help eligible voters meet the requirement. The goal is clarity and security, AND broad participation by those eligible to vote.

When voters know that everyone is playing by the same rules, trust grows. That trust benefits everyone.

Michigan Photo ID requirements were upheld by the courts in July of 2007 and went into effect for the November election without delay or problems. While Michigan has a provision that the voter not in possession of a photo id could sign an affidavit; very few did. This does not carry a heavy burden for anyone.

Acceptable Forms of Photo ID Should be Consistent Across States

Identifying acceptable forms of Photo ID nationally should be an essential element of this legislation. Student IDs should not be expressly prohibited and I would also encourage adding that the ID be current including the definition of current.

Cross-checks and Verification

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Another key element is a cross-check verification. If information such as a driver's license number or social security number is required, we must be sure that the law also includes the requirement that it actually be verified by the election official every time.

Requiring Photo ID for voting should not be controversial. It helps PROTECT THE VOTER and the election administrator.

Voter Registration Standards

Voter registration is the foundation of election integrity. A strong system begins with accurate information about who is eligible to vote in federal elections.

The MEGA Act's emphasis on citizenship verification reflects a basic principle. Federal elections are for United States citizens. Requiring documentary proof of citizenship at the time of registration would create a clear and consistent standard across states.

To suggest that this will harm certain demographics including married women and low-income voters is disingenuous and insulting. Our country recently completed the REAL ID process, which shows that nationwide identity verification efforts can be implemented thoughtfully and effectively. Michigan's very own Jocelyn Benson bragged on more than one occasion how easy the process was and the high percentage of Michiganders that had completed the process.

Registration and ongoing election verification should serve different purposes. At registration, election officials should collect and verify key information such as legal name, date of birth, last four of a social security number, citizenship, and a physical residential address or description of non-traditional housing to be used as their registered address. In Michigan it is required that your driver's license address matches your voter registration. A registration should not be considered complete without proof of citizenship.

Access to cross checking data should remain with election administrators and never be transferred to third parties. Nor should it be part of a back door deal to use voter registration information for any other purpose. Election administrators are trained, accountable, and operate within established legal frameworks. A clear chain of responsibility helps protect voter information, strengthens public confidence, and leads to greater integrity.

Voter List Maintenance Requirements

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Accurate voter rolls are the backbone of secure elections. List maintenance is an ongoing responsibility, and federal baseline standards can support states in carrying it out consistently.

Routine, transparent list maintenance processes help ensure that voter files reflect current residence and eligibility. When voters move, pass away, or become ineligible, states need clear tools and timelines to update their records. Cross checks with reliable government data sources can assist in this effort.

Strong voter list maintenance must include a clear and usable pathway for states to remove individuals who have remained on the rolls without any voting activity. When records sit untouched for long periods of time, confidence in the accuracy of the voter file erodes and these gaps create opportunities to cheat.

Federal baseline standards can support states in carrying out regular, structured list maintenance using reliable government data, interstate cross checks, and documented inactivity over time. When a voter has shown no activity across two federal election cycles and corroborating data indicates a move or other change in status, there should be a defined process and requirement for updating or removing that registration.

We must make sure the list of eligible voters is accurate, current, and worthy of public trust. When the foundation of the system is solid, confidence in every other part of the process grows.

Election Administration

Post-election Audits

Improving election administration and establishing baseline standards can generate better protections. Quality control through standardized post-election and performance audits will enable us to identify the shortfalls before they become a problem. Every election should be run as if you are going to a recount. A recount should never be suspended due to faulty administration.

Treatment of Ballots

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Establishing key ballot standards is paramount to the integrity of our elections. Paper ballots with numbered stubs should be used in all elections. They should be printed with safeguards such as a barcode or watermark to prevent fraudulent ballots.

Ballot AND voter harvesting should be treated as harsh offenses with stiff penalties.

In-person election day voting and limited early voting should be the standard for federal elections (state and local too). The standards for acceptance for the return of ballots should be consistent across the nation for federal elections, and it should be close of polls on Election Day.

All mail-in ballots – which should be considered absent voter ballots – should require a reason and a wet signature. Too many states have removed the application requirement and ballots are being mailed willy nilly with no verification of the voter’s continued registration at that mailing address prior to sending out the ballot.

The issuance and receipt of all ballot applications and ballots should be date and time stamped by an election official. This record must be retained consistent with federal retention requirements.

There should be no reporting in any county until the entire county’s results are in.

Further, a thorough chain of custody records must be kept and retained. This is critical to affirm to ensure the greatest level of integrity in the event of a recount, canvass or post-election audit(s).

Closing

Finally, these efforts will take commitment and resources. As the Michigan House Appropriations Chair, I would be remiss if I did not mention my concerns for adequately funding our elections. While I generally do not welcome BIG BROTHER, I do think that election equipment including the registration database should be considered key infrastructure. If we are to avoid systematic overhaul of our elections by states through Ranked Choice Voting, QR code voting, ballots on demand, and the like; I would encourage consideration of funding in concert with the adoption of this Act requiring compliance by all states and locals and under the scrutiny of Homeland Security audits to verify and confirm state compliance with all aspects of this Act.

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Election integrity is a broad term, and it has become a divisive label that fuels assumptions about people’s motives. If someone speaks in favor of election integrity, they are branded with a “MAGA” label or called an election denier. If someone raises concerns about access, they are accused of ignoring security. That dynamic erodes trust and distracts from the shared goal of strong elections.

The MEGA Act provides an opportunity to establish practical, nationwide baseline standards for federal elections while respecting the role of states in administering them. With thoughtful implementation, we can make elections work better for voters, for election officials, and for the country as a whole to ensure every ELIGIBLE voter CAN vote FREELY, SECRETLY, INDEPENDENTLY and SECURELY.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective, and I look forward to your questions.