



STATE OF MINNESOTA  
Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State  
Steve Simon

**Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon**

*Testimony before the United States Committee on House Administration*

*April 16, 2026*

Chairman Steil, Ranking Member Morelle, and members of the committee. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you information about Minnesota's election system. Our state is proud of our system that is widely regarded, in Minnesota and across the nation, as fair, honest, and secure. I am eager in particular to talk about the work that is done in Minnesota to ensure that Minnesota's voter rolls are accurate and up to date.

At the outset I want to note that every state's system is slightly different. While we all are obviously required to comply with federal law, each state's procedures differ slightly. I'm pleased to be here with my colleague Secretary Scott Schwab, who may operate under different state laws, but who I believe shares the common goal of administering an accurate and trustworthy election system. I was privileged to succeed Secretary Schwab as President of the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS).

With respect to Minnesota specifically, there are a variety of rigorous election security measures in place before, on, and after election day to ensure that our voter rolls are accurate and up to date.

I. Data sharing and verification

Eligible Minnesotans who submit a voter registration application must provide their name, birth date, address, signature, and driver's license or state identification card number when they register to vote. Minn. Stat. § 201.071, subd. 3. If they do not have a driver's license or state identification card, they must instead provide the last four digits of their Social Security number. *Id.* If they also do not have a Social Security number, they must submit a certification to that effect. Minn. R. 8200.9310, subp. 2. All applicants must also attest that they meet all the criteria to be eligible to vote, including that they are a United States citizen. Minn. Stat. § 201.071. Their information is then entered into Minnesota's statewide voter

registration system (SVRS), which is Minnesota’s centralized statewide voter registration list - required under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

Voters who are registered through Minnesota’s secure automatic voter registration system are only registered if they provide citizenship-affirming documentation at the time they apply for a state identification card or driver’s license. Individuals who provide citizenship-affirming documentation are compared against the list of individuals ineligible due to guardianship or felony incarceration. If they do not appear on the list of those ineligible to vote, the individual is mailed a notice indicating they will be automatically registered unless they “opt out” or decline registration. Individuals have 21 days to decline registration, and if they do not decline, their information is then entered into SVRS.

After the applicant’s data is entered into the SVRS, the Office of Secretary of State (OSS) verifies the applicant’s identity by providing their name, date of birth, and driver’s license or state identification card number to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety’s Driver and Vehicle Services Division (DVS) or, if the applicant provided only the last four digits of their Social Security number, to the Social Security Administration (SSA). Minn. Stat. § 201.121. These two entities determine whether the information provided by the applicant matches the data in their respective systems and informs the OSS of the result. If the data cannot be verified, the OSS notifies the applicable county auditor, who attempts to again match the data against the DVS or SSA database. Minn. R. 8200.9310. If the county auditor cannot do so, they must attempt to contact the applicant to obtain the information necessary for verification. *Id.* If the applicant cannot be verified after 10 days, and they are not a first-time voter for federal office in Minnesota who is registering by mail, the county auditor must mark the applicant’s registration as incomplete and challenge their record.<sup>1</sup> Minn. Stat. § 201.121. The applicant must then clear the challenge at least 21 days before the next election or at the polling place on election day before they are able to vote. *Id.*

If the applicant is a first-time voter in a federal election who is registering by mail, the county auditor must notify them that their application is incomplete. Minn. Stat. § 201.061, subd. 1a. The applicant must complete their registration by presenting a document authorized for election day registration either to their county auditor before election day; by registering to vote in person on election day; or by following the election day registration procedures for absentee voters. See *id.*, subds. 1a, 3 (listing documents that satisfy this standard). The applicant may also choose to register to vote in person at any time.

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<sup>1</sup> Information about the challenge process is available at Minnesota Statutes section 204C.12 and pages 34 and 35 of the OSS’s election judge guide, available at <https://www.sos.mn.gov/media/4905/election-judge-guide.pdf>.

The county auditor also verifies the applicant's address by sending them a non-forwardable post card. Minn. Stat. § 201.121. If the card is returned as not deliverable with no permanent forwarding address, the county auditor must challenge the applicant's record.<sup>2</sup> *Id.* The county auditor may then send a second post card, no sooner than 60 days after the first one, to the same address. Minn. Stat. § 201.12 If the second notice is returned, the county auditor must inactivate the applicant's record. *Id.* If the post card is returned with a permanent forwarding address, the county auditor must inactivate the person's record and, if the new address is located in Minnesota, send a copy of the card to the county auditor where the new address is located. *Id.* The county auditor receiving the card must update the voter's information and again attempt to verify the applicant's address. *Id.* If the voter's new address is outside Minnesota, the county auditor must send a notice to the voter informing them that their record in the SVRS will be inactivated unless the voter notifies the county auditor within 21 days that they are retaining their former address as their permanent residence. *Id.*

If both the applicant's identity and address can be verified through this process, the applicant is registered to vote and listed as an active voter in the SVRS.

## II. Voter list maintenance

In addition to the extensive safeguards taken above at the time of registration, Minnesota conducts regular list maintenance to ensure that only eligible people remain registered to vote.<sup>3</sup>

Minnesota's list maintenance process is the result of a close partnership between state and local election officials, who rely on extensive reporting from several agencies to update the records maintained in the SVRS. See Minn. Stat. §§ 201.13, .145. Those reports include:

- A monthly report from the Minnesota Department of Corrections listing the name, address, last known residential address that is not a correctional facility, and date of birth of all individuals ages 16 years or older who are ineligible to vote under Minnesota law because they are currently incarcerated for a felony offense;<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Individuals who register on election day are verified after the election and are referred to the county attorney for investigation and potential prosecution if they cannot be verified.

<sup>3</sup> Your letter references 52 U.S.C. § 20507, the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). Minnesota is exempt from the provisions of the NVRA, but the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) incorporates some of the NVRA's list-maintenance requirements. 52 U.S.C. § 21083(a)(2)(A); see also *id.* § 20503(b)(2) (exempting states that had election-day registration in 1994). Therefore, this letter will discuss Minnesota's list maintenance program as it relates to HAVA.

<sup>4</sup> The OSS also receives periodic reports from the U.S. Department of Justice on individuals who have been convicted of federal felony offenses.

- A monthly report from the Minnesota Department of Health containing the name, address, date of birth, and county of residence for all individuals 18 years or older who have died since the previous report;
- A monthly report provided by the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC)<sup>5</sup> listing all the people on the Social Security Death Index since the previous report;
- A report provided each business day by the Minnesota State Court Administrator containing the name, address, date of birth, and, if available, the driver's license number, state identification card number, or the last four digits of the Social Security number of each individual who is either subject to a guardianship order prohibiting them from voting or who has been found legally incompetent to vote; and
- A monthly report from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety listing the name, address, date of birth, driver's license or state identification card number, and, if available, the last four digits of the Social Security number of each individual the Department of Public Safety has identified as having temporary lawful status in the United States.

Each agency submits its report to the OSS, which compares it with data in the SVRS to determine whether any person listed in the report is a registered voter. *Id.* If so, the OSS notifies the appropriate county auditor so they can review and take appropriate action. *Id.* The auditor must challenge the record of each individual who is incarcerated, subject to a guardianship order, legally incompetent to vote, or listed as possessing temporary lawful status. *Id.* They must inactivate the record of each individual who has passed away. *Id.* In addition, the auditor must refer any person who has been reported to have registered to vote while possessing temporary lawful status or voted while incarcerated to the county attorney. *Id.* Those cases are investigated for potential prosecution.

The OSS and its county partners also take extensive steps to update the SVRS when voters change their address or name. Each month, ERIC provides the OSS a list of voters who: (1) moved from Minnesota to another ERIC member state; (2) moved within Minnesota; or (3) filed a change of permanent address with the U.S. Postal Service. Minnesota also receives reports directly from non-ERIC member state election offices listing names of persons who have registered to vote in their new state and provided their previous Minnesota address as part of their registration. Any person appearing on any of the above lists has their record

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<sup>5</sup> ERIC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization comprised of 25 states and the District of Columbia that provides data matching services to its members to help maintain accurate voter records. The ERIC member states are Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

updated in the SVRS and their new address verified the same way as a person registering to vote for the first time. With regard to name changes, the OSS receives a daily report from the State Court Administrator containing the name, address, and driver's license or state identification card number of each individual 18 years or older who changed their name. Minn. Stat. § 201.14. The OSS notifies county auditors of this information, and county auditors update each individual's voter record. *Id.*

In addition, as part of Minnesota's automatic voter registration program, DVS provides the OSS with the addresses of all individuals who are eligible to vote and have provided documentary proof of citizenship when they applied for or renewed their driver's license or state identification card. Minn. Stat. § 201.161. The OSS compares that data to data stored in the SVRS. If any of those individuals are already registered to vote, but have reported a new address to DVS, their voter record is updated and their new address verified. *Id.* If the individual does not provide documentary proof of citizenship, then DVS is prohibited from sending the person's information to the OSS, and the person will not be registered to vote as part of this process.

The SVRS also has several safeguards in place to prevent and eliminate duplicate voter registrations. If a county election official enters a new voter record or modifies an existing record, the SVRS checks to see if the driver's license or state identification card number or name, address, and date of birth match another record in the system. If it does, the SVRS automatically generates an error message notifying the official they need to review the potential duplicate record before proceeding.

In addition, ERIC provides the OSS with a monthly report of all voters with duplicate registrations within Minnesota. The OSS distributes those names to the county auditor so they can remove the duplicate entries. County officials must also run an SVRS-generated report before and after each election that identifies potential duplicate registrations based on six different criteria, including name, address, driver's license number, state identification card number, and the last four digits of a Social Security number. County officials must compare all the data in the potential matches and merge any duplicate entries. And, at the end of each calendar year, the OSS inactivates any voter who has not voted or updated their registration in the previous four years. Minn. Stat. § 201.171.

This work to maintain accurate voter rolls is done by local election officials in Minnesota's 87 counties, and that work is supported on election day by hundreds of municipalities and by over 30,000 election judges. These Minnesotans that work to administer our elections are committed to safe, secure, and accessible elections for all eligible voters within Minnesota. And I am gratified to say that public trust in this system is exceedingly high, as

evidenced both by public opinion polling<sup>6</sup> and by the fact that Minnesota routinely leads the nation in voter turnout. As Minnesota's Chief Election Official, I am proud to oversee a system that provides broad access for eligible voters while maintaining the safeguards necessary to preserve fair and accurate elections.

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<sup>6</sup> Ryan Faircloth, *Minnesota Poll: Most are confident in election system, think voting by mail is secure*, The Minnesota StarTribune, September 25, 2024.  
<https://www.startribune.com/minnesota-poll-most-are-confident-in-election-system-think-voting-by-mail-is-secure/601151259>