

FACT SHEET



Voter protections

Problem:

In the fall of 2024, there was a change in the way the Virginia voter roll was updated. More than 1600 people were cut from the voter lists between August and October.

In 2006, a bipartisan bill was passed in Virginia to ensure that non-citizens who accidentally registered would be prevented from voting. Currently, the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) regularly compares their list of customers who haven't confirmed citizenship, with registered voters through the Board of Elections. In August, this list check changed from monthly to daily. However, there are several problems with this process.

FIRST, when a person signs up for (or renews) a license at the DMV, the check box for citizenship is easy to miss or check the wrong. DMV workers aren't trained in voting rights, and might not know to confirm accuracy.

SECOND, the DMV has outdated data. If a person with a green card gets a driver's license, that individual would correctly assert non-citizenship. Three years later, if that same person becomes a naturalized citizen, he or she can register to vote. This person is not required to renew the driver's license for another five years, and therefore would be caught up in the DMV scan of "non-citizens".

THIRD, even if a citizen accidentally checks the wrong box at the DMV (or skips the question entirely, causing confusion), they don't have enough time to correct the record. Under current law, there are only two weeks between the DMV sending out the notice, and removal from the voter rolls. Currently, Virginia's mail system is one of the

slowest in the country. Add to that the fact that people move (requiring mail forwarding) or go on vacation (so may not check mail every day), and this timeline isn't reasonable for responses.

Solution:

VICPP and many partner organizations advocate several protections that would prevent eligible citizens from being removed from the voter rolls.

Ensure voter and DMV data is accurate: The bill would require the DMV to match more criteria before taking someone off the voter rolls. This includes making sure that Date of Birth, First and Last name and identifying numbers (light Driver's License Number or Social Security numbers) are a match, rather than just address. In addition, it requires that the attestation of "non-citizenship" happened after the voter registration, to make sure data is up-to-date.

Extending the timeline: The bill would allow voters more time to prove citizenship. Instead of 14 days, voters would have 28 days between the DMV sending the letter, and the voter needing to confirm citizenship.

Expanding modes of communication: The DMV currently sends a letter, notifying a person that they could be removed from voter rolls. However, if that person has a phone number or email on file, it would be a stronger system to reach out in each way.

Conclusion:

Protecting citizens' right to vote is a bipartisan priority. Virginia lawmakers have a chance to stand up for their constituents with these safeguards.