

FACT SHEET



Voter protections

Support SB 813 (Rouse) and HB 1657 (Henson)

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, many of whom were citizens and eligible voters. There are several problems with the process of using Department of Motor Vehicles data and timing to update Board of Elections voter rolls.

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 incorrectly. DMV workers aren't trained in voting rights, and might not know to confirm accuracy.

SECOND, 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. It's easy to miss something or not open mail every day, and Virginia's mail system is one of the slowest nationwide. Therefore, this timeline isn't sufficient for responses.

Solution:

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

Extending the timeline: The bill would allow voters more time to prove citizenship. Under currently law, citizens have fourteen days from the time the DMV sends a letter to prove citizenship. Virginia has one

of the slowest mail delivery times in the country. This bill would double that time frame. Instead of 14 days, eligible voters would have 28 days between the DMV sending the letter, and the voter needing to confirm citizenship.

90 day quiet period: Under national law, there is a three month period before elections in which voter rolls are protected from "systematic" removals. Of course, individuals can be taken off the rolls if they are ineligible to vote because of moving, being found guilty of a crime, or death. However, this ensures that people are not removed in broad swaths. This national law only applies to federal elections. Virginia has elections every single year, including in 2025, for state offices. This bill brings the regulation for state elections in conformity to the federal standards.

Background:

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.

Conclusion:

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

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