FEATURED LEGISLATIVE ANALYSIS / NO. 001

The SAVE Act & SAVE America Act: Citizenship Verification, Election Integrity, and Voter Access

A nonpartisan analysis of federal voter-registration proposals, legislative status, implementation issues, and institutional decision points.

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Executive summary

The SAVE Act (H.R. 22) and the later SAVE America Act are related but distinct federal legislative proposals. H.R. 22 passed the U.S. House on April 10, 2025 (220-208), proposing documentary proof of U.S. citizenship during federal voter registration. On February 11, 2026, the House passed SAVE America Act language as an amendment to S. 1383 (218-213); the expanded language includes specified photo-identification requirements for voting. Neither measure has become federal law as of this publication date. [1-5]

The central policy question is not whether citizenship matters: federal law already limits voting in federal elections to U.S. citizens. The live legislative question is how additional documentation, verification, notice, accessibility, privacy, and enforcement mechanisms would affect election security and the ability of eligible voters to register and cast ballots. GLAA does not treat proposed requirements as current obligations.

Analytical conclusion. A rigorous evaluation should examine evidence of need, the precise statutory text, administrative capacity, identity-document access, error-correction pathways, individual privacy, and the measurable consequences of implementation. These are evaluation

criteria, not a GLAA endorsement or opposition to a bill.

Legislative status snapshot | November 14, 2026

TRACK	RECORDED ACTION	STATUS FOR THIS BRIEF
SAVE Act / H.R. 22	House passage, Apr. 10, 2025; 220-208.	House-passed proposal; not enacted.
SAVE America Act / S. 1383	House amendment passed Feb. 11, 2026; 218-213. Senate cloture on a related voter-ID amendment failed Mar. 26, 2026 (53-47).	House-approved amendment; Senate has not approved final legislation; not enacted.

Sources: House Clerk roll calls, GPO bill versions, Senate roll-call records, and current Senate legislative index. [1-5, 8]

1. The statutory baseline: what federal law already requires

Noncitizen voting in federal elections is already prohibited by federal law, with narrow statutory exceptions. The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) requires citizenship eligibility information and a signed attestation under penalty of perjury in covered federal-registration processes. State and local election officials administer registration, subject to federal statutes including the NVRA and the Help America Vote Act. The Election Assistance Commission publishes the national mail voter-registration form with state-specific instructions. [6, 7, 9, 10]

This baseline distinction is necessary: a proposal to require new *documentary proof* at registration is not the same as creating the underlying citizenship requirement. State identification practices, available registration methods, and document procedures vary by jurisdiction. [6, 7]

2. What the two proposals would change

ISSUE	H.R. 22 (SAVE ACT)	S. 1383 HOUSE AMENDMENT (SAVE AMERICA ACT)
Citizenship documentation	Adds documentary proof of U.S. citizenship for registration in federal elections.	Retains documentary proof framework for registration.
Voter identification at the polls	Does not impose the same standalone nationwide photo-ID-at-voting framework described in the later proposal.	Adds specified identification requirements for casting ballots in federal elections, including provisions for absentee and provisional-ballot processes.
Administration	Would affect mail, motor-vehicle, and agency registration processes; includes list-maintenance and enforcement provisions.	Expands implementation and verification obligations, with operational implications for election officials and voters.
Legal status	House-passed bill, not law.	House-approved amendment to Senate bill, not law.

This table summarizes proposed frameworks rather than every exception, documentation category, or procedural safeguard. For exact legal language, consult the engrossed H.R. 22 and the House amendment to S. 1383. [1, 3, 6]

A terminology safeguard for public communications

The standalone H.R. 7296 introduced in January 2026 is not the same legislative action as the House vote on S. 1383 in February. S. 1383 originated with a veterans-advisory subject; the House substituted SAVE America Act election language. A public summary should name the specific bill number and chamber action to avoid suggesting that every bill with a similar title cleared both chambers. [3, 6]

3. Governance and implementation assessment

GLAA identifies five analytical workstreams for government agencies, legislative staff, civic institutions, and affected communities. These workstreams organize open questions; they do not predict actual effects without implementation data.

A. Verification integrity and safeguards

- Assess how the proposed evidence standard distinguishes confirmed ineligibility from missing, inconsistent, or delayed records.
- Compare duplicate-registration detection, citizenship-data validation, audit trails, error correction, and fraud referrals to current processes.

B. Eligible-voter document access

- Study access to passports, birth records, naturalization certificates, and acceptable alternate documents; separate ownership of a document from ability to obtain it by a deadline.
- Test name changes, citizens born abroad, tribal documentation, military and overseas registrations, rural travel burdens, disabilities, and individuals with limited digital access.

C. Election-administration readiness

- Model processing volume, staff training, public notices, system interoperability, help-desk capacity, document handling, and election deadlines.
- Evaluate state and county costs using transparent assumptions; no cost estimate is asserted in this paper.

D. Privacy, due process, and legal compliance

- Evaluate protection of citizenship records and other personally identifying information, access limitations, retention schedules, and independent auditability.
- Clarify notice, appeal, cure, and review procedures before treating a data discrepancy as a final eligibility determination.

E. Public understanding and trust

- Provide precise multilingual explanations of what is currently required versus what is only proposed.
- Measure implementation through documented processing accuracy, correction timeliness, service accessibility, and verified error rates rather than unsupported assumptions.

4. Perspectives to consider in legislative review

Supporters of strengthened documentation rules argue that common verification requirements could improve uniformity, help prevent improper registrations, and reinforce confidence in election administration. Whether these effects materialize depends on the design, accuracy, and execution of the procedures. [6]

Critics of stricter documentary and identification rules argue that eligible citizens without readily available records could face higher burdens, delays, or erroneous denials. They also identify potential fiscal, legal, and privacy costs. Such impacts must be evaluated against statutory safeguards and actual implementation evidence, not assumed to be uniform in every jurisdiction. [6, 7]

GLAA analytical posture: The policy tradeoffs should be stated as verifiable questions and tested with clearly disclosed methods. GLAA does not endorse or oppose H.R. 22, S. 1383, or a political party.

5. Practical questions for institutional decision-makers

Legal clarity. Which enacted law currently governs the decision? Are we relying on an introduced, House-passed, or Senate-passed proposal rather than a final statute?

Evidence. What quantified failure or abuse is the proposed change intended to address? What is the primary source and its period of coverage?

Documentation. Which records qualify? What alternatives and cure mechanisms exist for eligible citizens lacking a specified document?

Workflow. What changes are needed at DMVs, election offices, mail-registration intake, and absentee-ballot processing?

Equity and accessibility. Have travel, disability accommodations, language support, name changes, tribal records, and overseas circumstances been examined?

Data governance. Which agencies hold citizenship data? Who may access the records, and how are mistakes corrected and audited?

Evaluation. What outcomes would demonstrate improved accuracy without introducing avoidable barriers, and who validates the metrics?

6. GLAA research conclusions

Finding 1 | Status matters. H.R. 22 and the House SAVE America Act amendment remain proposals for federal law as of the stated review date. A House vote alone does not make a proposal binding nationwide. [1-5, 8]

Finding 2 | The proposals have different scopes. The documentary citizenship-verification provisions of H.R. 22 should not be collapsed into the later House amendment to S. 1383, which includes additional voter-identification requirements. [1, 3, 6]

Finding 3 | Implementation is substantive policy. Verification accuracy, timely access to documents, compliance workload, remedies for erroneous records, and privacy requirements all affect whether the statutory objectives could be delivered. [6, 7]

Finding 4 | Source discipline protects public trust. Communications should distinguish existing law, introduced bills, passed chamber amendments, official votes, advocacy claims, and GLAA analysis.

Methods, attribution & limitations

This paper is an official-source desk review prepared for public education and institutional discussion. Legislative status was checked against House and Senate records, the Government Publishing Office, the Congressional Research Service, and federal election-administration materials, with reference checks through November 14, 2026. The paper revises themes developed in GLAA briefing notes from March 2026; it is not a transcript or reproduction of those slides.

No interviews, original survey, causal impact study, election audit, or independent fiscal model were conducted for this publication. Evaluative statements are identified as GLAA analytical considerations. It is not legal advice, an agency position, a government endorsement, or evidence of a government contract. This initial working publication does not represent formal GLAA board adoption. Readers should consult the most recent official status and jurisdiction-specific rules before taking action.

References and verification trail

Sources are listed in order of use; hyperlinks point to the underlying official record or a publicly accessible mirror of a Congressional Research Service report. Accessed November 14, 2026.

[1] U.S. Government Publishing Office. H.R. 22, Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, engrossed in House, Apr. 10, 2025. [Source]

[2] U.S. House of Representatives, Office of the Clerk. Roll Call 102, H.R. 22, passage by 220-208, Apr. 10, 2025. [Source]

[3] U.S. Government Publishing Office. S. 1383, House engrossed amendment, SAVE America Act, Feb. 11, 2026. [Source]

[4] U.S. House of Representatives, Office of the Clerk. Roll Call 69, passage of S. 1383 as amended, 218-213, Feb. 11, 2026. [Source]

[5] U.S. Senate. Roll Call 73, cloture not invoked on S. Amdt. 4732 to S. 1383, 53-47, Mar. 26, 2026. [Source]

[6] Congressional Research Service. IF12902, Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act (SAVE America Act) and Federal Voter Registration Policy and Law, Feb. 24, 2026 (archived republication). [Source]

[7] Congressional Research Service. R46406, Voter Registration: Recent Developments and Issues for Congress, updated Oct. 30, 2026 (archived republication). [Source]

[8] U.S. Senate. Commonly Searched for Legislation, 119th Congress; index updated Nov. 9, 2026. [Source]

[9] U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. About the National Voter Registration Act. [Source]

[10] U.S. Election Assistance Commission. National Mail Voter Registration Form and state-specific instructions. [Source]

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