



RIVAC

RI Voting Access Coalition

March 31, 2025

Representative Seth Magaziner
935 Jefferson Blvd, Suite 3003
Warwick, RI 02886

Representative Gabe Amo
1070 Main St, Suite 300
Pawtucket, RI 02860

Dear Representatives Magaziner and Amo:

We write today as members of the Rhode Island Voting Access Coalition (RIVAC), the state's largest coalition of groups dedicated to expanding access to the ballot, to ask you to oppose the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act when it comes before the U.S. House of Representatives. We are grateful for your opposition to the bill when you voted against it in 2024 and we urge you to do so again in the current Congress.

The SAVE Act would require documentary proof of citizenship (e.g. a birth certificate, U.S. Passport, or naturalization papers) to register to vote, or update a voter registration, for federal elections. This change would disenfranchise thousands of Rhode Islanders who are otherwise eligible to vote but cannot access the documentation. Estimates are that 21 million Americans do not have access to the documentation that would be required under the SAVE Act.¹ Acquiring the underlying documentation would be both time consuming and expensive.

The SAVE Act would disproportionately affect women. It would require married women who change their surname to produce marriage documents matching their birth or

¹ See:

<https://cdce.umd.edu/sites/cdce.umd.edu/files/pubs/Voter%20ID%20survey%20Key%20Results%20June%202024.pdf>

naturalization documents. It's estimated that almost 80% of women take their husband's name when they marry.² It would also create additional barriers to voting for transgender people in our state, who face increased difficulty obtaining accurate identity documents.

The SAVE Act would upend our current systems for voter registration in Rhode Island. The SAVE Act would only allow voters to use their driver's license to register if it is an "enhanced driver's license." At this time Rhode Island does not offer that type of license, rendering our current automatic and online voter registration systems useless. Additionally, it would require the presentation of the proof of citizenship documents "in person," rendering our current process of voter registration through the mail useless. Ultimately it may lead to the creation of separate voter registration systems for state and federal elections, a burden not only on voters but on election officials.

Rhode Island has made great strides in modernizing our voter registration system in the last decade, adopting online voter registration and automatic voter registration. Much of that success has come because of the hard work of our organizations to push forward voter registration modernization efforts in Rhode Island. The SAVE Act would be an enormous setback to those efforts.

We urge you to do whatever you can to oppose passage of the SAVE Act.

Sincerely,

ACLU of Rhode Island
ARISE
Better Elections Rhode Island
Brown Votes
Clean Water Action Rhode Island
Climate Action Rhode Island
Common Cause Rhode Island
Housing Network of Rhode Island
Every Vote Counts @ Brown
Latino Policy Institute
League of Women Voters of Rhode Island
Ocean State RCV
Rhode Island Commission for Human Rights
Rhode Island Democratic Women's Caucus
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

² See:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/09/07/about-eight-in-ten-women-in-opposite-sex-marriage-s-say-they-took-their-husbands-last-name/>

Rhode Island NOW
Rhode Island Working Families Power
The Womxn Project
Women's Fund of Rhode Island