



How To Navigate Moving SAVE Act-Style State Legislation for Your Nonprofit

As of 2026, dozens of states are considering their own versions of the federally introduced “SAVE Act” legislation, the widely watched bill requiring voters to provide proof of citizenship to register for federal elections and a government-issued photo ID to vote. While movement at the federal level stalled in 2025 and is currently gridlocked in 2026, state legislatures across the country have introduced state-level versions with varying levels of support and pathways to enactment.

These laws and rules can change how voters register or what documents they need when voting. This guide helps you verify what’s real, what’s proposed, and what’s actually in effect, so you can serve your community with confidence.

Glossary *The following terms are used throughout this document.*

- **Bill:** a proposal, not yet law
- **Enacted law:** passed legislature + signed by executive branch (president, governor, Mayor...etc)
- **Effective date:** when the change legally starts
- **Administrative rule/guidance:** instructions elections officials use to implement
- **Injunction/stay:** court order pausing enforcement (often temporary)
- **Settlement/consent decree:** agreement that can change what’s enforced

Steps to Confirming Where SAVE Act-Style Legislation is in Your State + What You Should Do About It

Step 1: Check if there is legislation in your state

There are a few ways that you can quickly scan to see if voter ID laws are proposed in your state’s legislature:

a. One way is to see this resource from the Voting Rights Lab:

1. [States | Election Policy Tracker | Voting Rights Lab](#)
2. Select your state
3. Click on “monitored bills”
4. Sort issues column by “ID requirements”
5. These are state-level proof of citizenship bills proposed
6. This is the easiest, presorted way to scan bills being tracked by national partners working to protect access to voting

b. Alternatively, you can run a search via Ballotpedia

1. [Admin-state Search](#)
2. Under “Keyword” search “ID”
3. Select your state + 2026 for “session year”
4. Note this can turn up unrelated searches



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Step 2: Understand exactly how the new bill could affect you and your community by answering a few questions.

- Does the bill change voter registration, i.e. does it add or take away options for voter registration from residents? Look for ways that it differs from current law.
- Does it require documentary proof of citizenship to register?
- Does it affect DMV/automatic registration, mail registration, online registration, or third-party registration?
- Does it add new ID/document requirements for registered voters (rare, but important)?
- Does it create new verification steps that could slow processing (multiple or different forms of ID, additional training for organizations registering people to vote)?

Step 3: Understand what level of urgency you need to address this with your community.

If changes are potential, are they potential this year before the midterm? Or are they proposed to take effect in a different year? This could alter your plans for the year.

Note: every proposed law in any state has to go through every step listed below.

- Filed/Introduced
- In committee (hearing scheduled? vote scheduled?)
- Passed committee
- Passed one chamber
- Passed both chambers
- Signed/Enacted (or vetoed)
- Rules/Guidance issued (implementation details)
- In effect (effective date reached)

Sometimes there is a lot of noise... the following are “noisy” proceedings that don’t necessitate immediate action but can trigger local news alerts etc. that might cause concern in your community or create confusion:

- Hearings scheduled, committee votes, floor calendar placement, leadership sponsorship, companion bills, or budget/appropriations tie-ins
- Avoid overreacting to: “introduced,” social media clips, press releases, or “someone said it will pass”
- Rely on credible information from .gov sources, and issue advocacy organizations with expertise in policy

TIP: In addition to checking the trackers shared, you can set up alerts (bill number + keyword) via the Voting Rights Tracker



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Quick Timing Pressure Test (AKA Is This a “Right Now” Problem) + What It Means for Your Civic Engagement Work

- **Is the bill enacted?** If no → it can’t change requirements yet (but planning may be useful).
- **What is the effective date?** Sometimes immediate, sometimes months later, sometimes tied to rulemaking.
- **Does it require new forms/systems/training?** If yes → implementation may lag even after enactment. It also might be connected to a budget item necessary for implementation.
- **Is there litigation (a piece of legislation is being challenged in court)?** If yes → is enforcement paused (injunction/stay) or not?
- **Does it apply to new registrations only, or also to updates/renewals?** (Different impact levels.)

“This Year Risk” Rating System

Using all the information above, you can confidently confirm what level of urgency you need to use when addressing your civic engagement plans for the year:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Green | not enacted OR enacted but effective after this year’s elections |
| Yellow | enacted with an effective date this year OR guidance in progress |
| Red | enacted + effective now + implementation guidance active (or confirmed by elections office) |

What You Can Do At Each Level

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Green | monitor; don’t change client guidance yet; prepare FAQ |
| Yellow | start staff prep; confirm with elections office; update referral scripts; identify high-impact programs (DMV clinics, benefits enrollments, citizenship services, etc.) |
| Red | update materials immediately; intensify voter registration assistance; add “document checklist” support; coordinate with election office and partners |



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Don't Forget

You can **always** contact your local elections office (either the Board of Elections/or County Clerk) to clarify if you find yourself in level **Red** or still have questions. Sample questions include:

- “Are there any current changes to voter registration requirements related to proof of citizenship or documentary requirements?”
- “If legislation passed recently, what is the effective date and what should applicants bring?”
- “Do changes apply to new registrations only, or also to address/name changes?”
- “Is there any court order affecting implementation that you are following?”
- “Have you issued updated guidance to staff or the public? Can you share a link?”
- “If someone lacks documents, what are the alternatives (sworn statement, attestation, provisional process, follow-up options)?”
- “What’s the last recommended date to submit a registration application before the next election?”
- “What ID is needed to register to vote vs. what ID is needed to show on election day at the polls?”

Please note: *This is not legal advice. For individualized legal guidance, consult qualified counsel or a trusted election protection/legal partner. For a list of trusted legal partners, don't hesitate to reach out.*