

SAVE High-Level Talking Points

SAVE Overview

The Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) is an information service for authorized federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local agencies to verify the U.S. Citizenship or immigration status of individuals within their jurisdiction.

It provides fast, secure, and reliable verification to assist user agencies in maintaining program integrity.

What SAVE Does Not Do

SAVE is not a database. It does not store citizenship and immigration information. Instead, it accesses numerous systems (DHS, DoJ, SSA) to verify the U.S. citizenship and immigration status of benefit-seeking applicants and voter registrants.

SAVE is one of many tools voting administrators can use to determine citizenship.

SAVE does not determine eligibility; these determinations are made by the administering agency.

SAVE alone does not provide all necessary information to determine voter eligibility, such as place of residence or criminal records, nor does it provide historical citizenship or immigration information, as responses are point-in-time Immigration status checks.

SAVE Optimization – The Challenge

DHS is required by 8 U.S.C. § 1373(c) to respond to inquiries from Federal, state, or local government agencies seeking to verify or ascertain the U.S. citizenship or immigration status of any individual within the jurisdiction of the agency for any purpose authorized by law, including for voting agencies to conduct voter verification (i.e., voter registration and/or voter list maintenance).

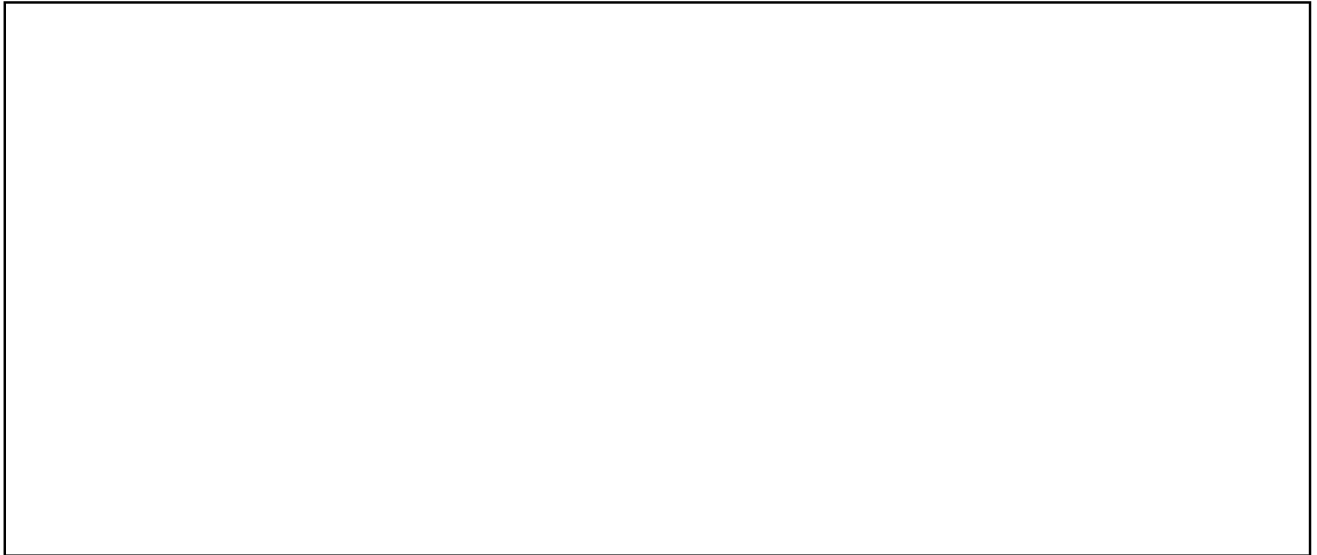
USCIS engaged with representatives from 18+ states, the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), and the National Association of State Election Directors (NASED) for listening sessions regarding the current voter registration processes and their ideas about future functionality.

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SAVE Optimization – Where We Are (and going)

Recent and upcoming enhancements to SAVE include:

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Recent Press & Correspondence

SAVE's enhancements for voter verification have garnered recent press coverage and inquiries from members of congress and non-governmental entities

Recent press highlights include articles from NPR (6/29/2025) and a release from the Brennan Center for Justice (7/21/2025). Some issues raised by press have included:

- Some misinformation that SAVE is a database, rather than a query system
- Reliability of data sources, and the possibility of errors, false negatives, and wrongful voter purges
- The need for an update to the SAVE System of Records Notice (SORN)
- The processes by which USCIS holds state voting administrators accountable to the terms set forth in the SAVE Memorandum of Agreement with USCIS.

US Senators Padilla (D-CA), Merkley (D-OR) and Peters (D-MI) wrote a letter to Secretary Noem on July 15, 2025, outlining concerns and asking questions about SAVE enhancements. Some key concerns included:

- Data quality issues that may cause state and local officials to receive false positives or incomplete results
- The need for routine documentation and appropriate public notice about the program's operations and safeguards
- A request for briefing to the staff of the Senate Committees on Rules and Administration and Homeland Security and Government Affairs

The Public Interest Legal Foundation, a nonpartisan, nonprofit, public interest law firm dedicated to election integrity received wrote a letter to Secretary Noem on July 7, 2025. The letter:

- Commends USCIS' efforts and
- Calls the recent enhancements to SAVE a "more than common-sense 80 percent issue" that takes SAVE from "an in-demand system that few state election offices could practically use to a tool that should soon be as commonly relied upon as the Social Security Death Index."

On Background:

SAVE Verification – How it Works

A registered agency enters:

- An applicant's biographic information (First & Last Name, Date of Birth) and
- At least one enumerator (Social Security Number, USCIS/Alien Registration Number, Naturalization Certification Number), along with the benefit(s) requested by the applicant (Voter Registration, Voter List Maintenance).

System checks are performed with SSA and DHS databases.

The system responds with:

- The applicant's immigration status or U.S. citizenship, or
- A request to resubmit with additional information, or an institute additional verification.

Approximately 98% of all voter verification cases return an automated status at the initial response.

SAVE Verification – Response Details

Possible SAVE responses on initial inquiries include:

- United States Citizen (per SSA Record) if the case matches SSA record and citizenship code is USC without a foreign-born indicator,
- Deceased (per SSA) if the case matches the SSA Death Master File record,
- Unable to Return Record from SSA – Resubmit with Additional Information if no match with SSA and the case is closed with no escalation,
- Immigration Enumerator Required – Resubmit with Additional Information if the match with SSA has a Foreign Born indicator but no A-number available to determine citizenship or immigration status,
- Full Social Security Number Required – Resubmit with Additional Information if multiple matches with SSA using Name, DoB, and last four digits of SSN,
- SAVE Immigration Status Response if the case matches SSA record, has a foreign indicator, and A# is returned that matches DHS records (this response may include USC or any of the Non-USC immigration statuses), and
- Institute Additional Verification if the case matches SSA record, has a foreign indicator, and A# is returned that does not match DHS records.

Manual Verification Process

- If the SAVE response is NON-USC or Institute Additional Verification, additional information must be entered, including uploading the applicant's immigration documentation if available and adding any additional comments.
- The request is then submitted, with a processing time of usually 5 federal workdays (current response time as of July 25, 2025 is 7 federal workdays).

- The response will provide the status or request resubmission with documents if needed and not already submitted by the benefit-granting agency.