

**Written Testimony
Secretary of State Wes Allen
State of Alabama
March 12, 2024**

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today about election security.

As Alabama's Secretary of State, I serve as the State's Chief Elections Officer and work closely with the Probate Judges, Circuit Clerks, Sheriffs, Absentee Elections Managers, poll workers and Boards of Registrars who are all an integral part of our elections process at the local level in each of our 67 counties.

When I took the oath of office 14 months ago, I made it a top priority to ensure that our elections are fair and secure so that every eligible voter who wishes to cast a vote in any election in our state could do so with confidence knowing their vote would be counted properly. Elections are the bedrock of our Constitutional Republic and it is my Constitutional duty to ensure our elections are conducted with integrity, honesty and accuracy.

Voter registration and voter file maintenance are the foundation of election integrity.

Registered voters can choose to participate in elections in Alabama with the confidence that our elections process is fair and secure because Alabama has taken solid steps in our state to ensure election integrity.

We have enacted legislation in Alabama that makes it illegal for any voting tabulator to be connected to the internet. Alabama state law requires the use of paper ballots in all elections.

Each of our voters must verify their identity with photo identification at his or her polling place. If a voter does not have a valid photo ID for voting purposes, my office will send someone to the location of their choice, even their home, to issue them a voter ID, upon request.

When I served in the Alabama House of Representatives, I sponsored and passed legislation, which prohibits private individuals or organizations from purchasing election tabulators, ballots or supplies and prohibits those same entities from paying election administration officials or their staffs. This law ensures our elections are free of influence from any outside group or individual. Steps like these, that we have taken in Alabama, serve to solidify the foundation of voter confidence.

Proper voter file maintenance is essential to instilling and preserving confidence in elections. Just this year, I, with the help of the dedicated team at Alabama's Office of Secretary of State, established the Alabama Voter Integrity Database. . . AVID. For the first time in our state's history, we have been approved to directly cross check our voter file with the national death master index maintained by the Social Security Administration so that when an Alabama voter dies in another state, we are able to identify and remove that individual from our voter file. Immediately removing deceased Alabamians from our voter file not only instills confidence but also allows us to maintain a more accurate voter file. Every state should be able to do this, but excessive federal regulations make it more difficult than it should be for states to access this important information. Although we have now been approved to utilize that index, the process was burdensome and time consuming. In fact, our access was further delayed due to the fact that the State of Alabama was considered for access behind a long line of private entities. You, as members of the United States Senate, can remove those obstacles and make this information immediately available to every Secretary of State in this nation.

AVID also enables us to work with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency to receive notifications of Alabama licensed drivers over the age of 18 who have received a driver license in another state. Additionally, by comparing the National Change of Address database maintained by the United States Postal Service to our voter file, we identify registered Alabama voters who have requested to have their mail forwarded due to moving to a location outside of our state. For the first time in our state's history, we have entered into agreements with each of our border states allowing us to identify people who are registered to vote in Alabama and in a border state.

Voters who are identified as possibly relocating through any of these methods receive a mailer from their county Board of Registrars asking them to confirm their relocation or update their Alabama voter registration information. To date, we have, through AVID, identified 109,709 Alabama voters who have likely relocated outside of the state. But, unlike deceased voters, we cannot immediately remove them from the Alabama voter file. The National Voter Registration Act of 1993, also known as NVRA, mandates that we wait four years to make such a removal. If I could make a recommendation to this body to increase confidence in our elections, it would be to shorten the four-year waiting period mandated by the NVRA, especially considering the fact that state to state movers account for 19.9% of all relocations according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The four-year waiting period allows an individual to remain in a voter file in a state in which they no longer live for several elections including:

- a Presidential election
- a U.S. Senate election
- a gubernatorial election
- 2 congressional elections

- Mayoral election
- County commission elections
- State house and Senate elections
- and Judicial elections.

Four years is, quite frankly, too long. Amending the NVRA to shorten the four-year waiting period would certainly increase voter confidence, decrease bloated voter files and result in more accurate voter files across the nation.

Finally, the federal government currently obstructs the ability of the states to verify the citizenship of men and women registering to vote or attempting to vote in our elections. The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) division of the Department of Homeland Security has denied our repeated requests to obtain a list of non-citizens for the purpose of ensuring that only legal American citizens register to vote or cast votes in our elections. The USCIS directs us to use the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) database. However, SAVE explicitly states that the database is not to be used for voter registration verification. One might ask why the federal government prevents us from using every available database to ensure that only U.S. Citizens are able to vote in our elections, especially in light of the hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants crossing our Southern border each month.

Again, thank you for your time. It has been an honor and a privilege to appear before you today.