

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

2026 Regular Session

To: Elections

By: Senator(s) England, McLendon

Senate Bill 2588

(As Passed the Senate)

AN ACT TO BE KNOWN AS THE
"SAFEGUARD HONEST INTEGRITY IN
ELECTIONS FOR LASTING DEMOCRACY
(SHIELD) ACT"; TO AMEND SECTION
23-15-15, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
TO REVISE THE PROCEDURE BY WHICH A
REGISTRAR VERIFIES AN APPLICANT'S
CITIZENSHIP UPON RECEIPT OF A
COMPLETED VOTER REGISTRATION
APPLICATION; TO REQUIRE THE
REGISTRAR TO ENTER EACH APPLICANT'S
INFORMATION INTO THE UNITED STATES
CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION
SERVICE'S SYSTEMATIC ALIEN
VERIFICATION FOR ENTITLEMENTS
(SAVE); TO REQUIRE REGISTRARS TO
MAKE ANNUAL REPORTS TO THE
SECRETARY OF STATE REGARDING THE
NUMBER OF APPLICANTS FLAGGED BY A

SAVE SYSTEM CHECK AND THE NUMBER REMOVED FOLLOWING CONFIRMATION; TO CREATE NEW SECTION 23-15-165.1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO CONDUCT AN ANNUAL COMPARISON OF THE STATEWIDE ELECTIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM RECORDS WITH THE SAVE DATABASE AND TO REPORT INELIGIBLE MATCHES TO THE APPROPRIATE REGISTRAR; TO CREATE NEW SECTION 23-15-165.2, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE THE SECRETARY OF STATE TO ANNUALLY REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE RESULTS ACHIEVED WITH THE SAVE SYSTEM; TO CREATE NEW SECTION 23-15-165.3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO EXEMPT PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION COLLECTED THROUGH USE OF THE SAVE SYSTEM FROM THE MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC RECORDS ACT OF 1983; TO CREATE NEW SECTION 23-15-165.4, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE FOR SEVERABILITY OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE PRECEDING SECTIONS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE
LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF
MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Safeguard Honest Integrity in Elections for Lasting Democracy (SHIELD) Act".

SECTION 2. Section 23-15-15, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

23-15-15. (1) * * * Upon receiving a completed voter registration application, the registrar shall enter the applicant into the Statewide Elections Management System. The registration application shall be compared with the Department of Public Safety driver's license and identification information. If such information indicates that a particular applicant is not a citizen of the United States, the Statewide Elections Management System shall notify the registrar,

or his or her designee, that the applicant may not be a citizen of the United States.

(* * *2) After receiving the notice from the Statewide Elections Management System as provided in subsection (1) of this section, the registrar, or his or her designee, shall:

(a) Enter the applicant's information into the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service's Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) or its successor database for further inquiry; and

(b) If the database in paragraph (a) of this subsection indicate that the applicant is not a citizen, send a notice by first-class mail to the applicant's mailing address provided on the voter registration application inquiring whether the individual is eligible to be registered to vote. The registrar may, in addition to

first-class mail, contact the applicant by email or telephone.

(* * *3) Any applicant who receives the notice under paragraph (b) of subsection (* * *1) * * * of this section shall, within thirty (30) days of the receipt of such notice, provide proof of citizenship to the registrar or his or her designee.

(* * *4) For purposes of this section, proof of citizenship includes, but is not limited to:

(a) The applicant's birth certificate or a legible photocopy of the birth certificate;

(b) A United States passport, or a legible photocopy of the pertinent pages of the passport, identifying the applicant and showing the passport number;

(c) The applicant's United States naturalization documentation, a legible photocopy of the naturalization documentation, or the number of the

applicant's Certificate of Naturalization; except that any person who provides the number of the Certificate of Naturalization in lieu of the naturalization documentation shall not be deemed to have provided proof of citizenship until the number is verified with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security or its successor; or

(d) Any document or method of proof of citizenship established by the Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, Public Law 99-603, compiled in 8 USC Section 1101 et seq.

(* * *5) If the applicant provides proof of citizenship and meets all other qualifications provided by law, the registrar shall register the applicant to vote.

(* * *6) If the applicant does not reply to the notice or provide proof of citizenship, the registrar of the county, or his or her designee, where the person registered to vote shall mark the applicant as "PENDING" in the Statewide Elections Management System until * * *:

(a) A voter in pending status may cast an affidavit ballot. The affidavit ballot shall be considered if the voter provides the required documentation under subsection (* * *4) of this section to the registrar within five (5) days of casting the affidavit ballot.

(b) If the applicant fails to respond to the notice or cast an affidavit ballot and provide the proof described in subsection (* * *4) of this section * * * during the period beginning on the date the notice was sent and ending on the day

after the date of the second general election for federal office that occurs after the date of the notice, the registrar shall mark the applicant as "REJECTED" in the Statewide Elections Management System.

(7) The registrar shall report to the Secretary of State on an annual basis:

(a) The number of registrants flagged by a SAVE system check; and

(b) The number removed following confirmation.

(8) All documentation provided to show proof of citizenship as well as the Department of Public Safety database or relevant federal and state agency and county records shall be confidential and shall not be subject to inspection, examination, copying or reproduction under the Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983.

SECTION 3. The following shall be codified as Section 23-15-165.1, Mississippi Code of 1972:

23-15-165.1. (1) The Secretary of State shall conduct a check annually of Statewide Elections Management System records against the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service's Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) or its successor database. The check must occur no later than one hundred eighty (180) days before a regularly scheduled federal general election.

(2) The Secretary shall transmit any potential ineligible matches to the appropriate registrar, who shall send a notice under Section 23-15-15 inquiring whether the individual is eligible to be registered to vote and place the voter in pending verification status until the voter provides

proof of citizenship as outlined in subsections (2) through (5) of Section 23-15-15.

(3) A removal may not occur solely based on a SAVE match. Cancellation may occur only upon failure to respond or confirmation of ineligibility.

(4) A SAVE-based removal may not occur during the ninety (90) days before a federal election.

SECTION 4. The following shall be codified as Section 23-15-165.2, Mississippi Code of 1972:

23-15-165.2. The Secretary of State shall submit an annual report to the Legislature detailing:

(a) The number of registrants flagged by a SAVE system check;

(b) The number removed following confirmation; and

(c) Recommendations for improvement.

SECTION 5. The following

shall be codified as Section 23-15-165.3, Mississippi Code of 1972:

23-15-165.3. SAVE data must be used in compliance with federal and state data protections laws. Personally identifiable information is exempt from public disclosure under the Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983 (Sections 25-61-1 through 25-61-19).

SECTION 6. The following shall be codified as Section 23-15-165.4, Mississippi Code of 1972:

23-15-165.4. If any provision of Sections 23-15-165.1 through 23-15-165.4 is held invalid, the remainder shall remain in effect.

SECTION 7. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2026.