

POLICY BACKGROUNDER

The SAVE America Act: Voter Suppression Dressed as Election Integrity

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, commonly known as the SAVE Act, represents one of the most significant proposed changes to federal election law in decades. While proponents frame the legislation as a common-sense measure to prevent noncitizen voting, a thorough examination reveals that the bill would create substantial barriers for millions of eligible American voters, impose unfunded mandates on state and local election officials, and address a problem that statistical evidence demonstrates is extraordinarily rare. This backgrounder provides a comprehensive analysis of the legislation, its implications, and the critical questions that voters should consider when evaluating this proposal.

The SAVE Act, which passed the House in February on a party-line vote, would require every American to produce a passport or birth certificate to register to vote. Twenty-one million Americans don't have those documents. The bill provides no funding and no phase-in period. It criminalizes election workers who make honest mistakes, and requires states to submit their voter rolls—or voter registration lists—to the Department of Homeland Security. And it was passed by the same party that has spent half a century opposing federal control of elections.

The bill was subsequently blocked in the U.S. Senate, where it failed to overcome the 60-vote threshold required to break a Democratic filibuster. Despite having the support of all 50 Republican senators willing to vote for it, the legislation could not reach the 60 votes needed for cloture. But this legislation can return in another form.

Incumbent Congressman Russell Fry (R-SC7) was a vocal and enthusiastic supporter of the SAVE America Act, calling it a matter of "national responsibility" and demanding the Senate pass it immediately. Fry advocated on Facebook on March 6, 2026 citing claims 71% of Americans support proof of citizenship requirements. However, this polling, conducted by Heritage Action (the advocacy arm of the Heritage Foundation), deserves scrutiny regarding methodology, question framing, and the disconnect between poll questions and the actual legislative text.

John Vincent, candidate for South Carolina's 7th Congressional District, stands in firm opposition to this legislation – not because he opposes election integrity, but because he believes in the real thing: protecting the sacred right of every eligible American citizen to cast their vote without unnecessary, burdensome, and discriminatory barriers.

This paper examines what the SAVE America Act actually does, who it harms, why Russell Fry's support for it is a betrayal of the working people of South Carolina's 7th District, and how John Vincent's support for the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2025 represents the true path to secure, fair, and accessible elections for all Americans.

SECTION I: UNDERSTANDING THE LEGISLATION

Overview of the SAVE Act

The SAVE Act amends the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA) to require documentary proof of United States citizenship for every voter registration application. The bill mandates that states cannot process any voter registration application unless the applicant presents specific documentation proving citizenship status.

Acceptable Documentation Under the Act

The legislation specifies a narrow range of acceptable documents for proving citizenship:

- REAL ID-compliant identification that indicates citizenship status
- Valid U.S. passport
- Military identification with a record of service showing U.S. birthplace
- Government-issued photo ID showing U.S. birthplace
- Government-issued photo ID presented with certified birth certificate
- Consular Report of Birth Abroad
- Naturalization Certificate or Certificate of Citizenship
- American Indian Card with KIC classification

Key Provisions and Their Implications

Provision 1: Documentary Proof of Citizenship Requirement

What the bill states: No state may register an individual to vote in federal elections unless the applicant presents documentary proof of U.S. citizenship at the time of registration.

The hidden implications: This requirement fundamentally transforms the voter registration process. Currently, voters affirm their citizenship under penalty of perjury when registering—a system that has proven effective while maintaining accessibility. The SAVE Act replaces this attestation system with a documentary requirement that places the burden on citizens to locate, secure, and present specific government documents.

The practical consequences extend far beyond new registrations. Any time a voter needs to update their registration—whether due to moving, a name change, or updating personal information—they would need to present citizenship documentation again. For military families who move every two to three years, this creates a perpetual bureaucratic burden that could effectively disenfranchise service members.

Provision 2: In-Person Presentation Requirement

What the bill states: For mail-in voter registration, applicants must present documentary proof of citizenship in person to election officials.

The hidden implications: This provision functionally eliminates mail-in voter registration despite its continued technical availability. Voters using the national mail registration form would need to deliver their citizenship documents in person to an election office before the registration deadline. This creates an insurmountable barrier for:

- Rural voters who live far from election offices
- Voters with disabilities who face transportation challenges
- Working families who cannot take time off during business hours
- Senior citizens with mobility limitations

The legislation also fails to clearly specify how documentary proof should be submitted for online voter registration systems, creating ambiguity that could lead to inconsistent implementation across jurisdictions.

Provision 3: Criminal Penalties for Election Officials

What the bill states: Election officials who register applicants who fail to present documentary proof of citizenship face criminal prosecution.

The hidden implications: This provision creates a chilling effect on election administration. Officials may become overly cautious, rejecting legitimate applications when documentation appears questionable or unfamiliar. The threat of criminal prosecution for administrative errors—a possibility

even when the applicant is actually a U.S. citizen—places an unreasonable burden on election workers who are already experiencing high turnover and burnout.

The legislation also authorizes private citizens to sue election officials who they believe are not sufficiently complying with the law. This encourages vigilante enforcement and creates a hostile environment for election administrators, further destabilizing the election workforce at a time when experienced personnel are already scarce.

Provision 4: Voter Roll Maintenance and Purges

What the bill states: States must establish programs to identify and remove noncitizens from voter rolls using Department of Homeland Security databases, Social Security Administration records, and other sources.

The hidden implications: While maintaining accurate voter rolls is important, this provision mandates aggressive list maintenance that has historically resulted in the wrongful removal of eligible voters. Texas provides a cautionary example: in 2019, the acting secretary of state resigned after his office wrongly questioned the citizenship of nearly 100,000 people, many of whom were naturalized U.S. citizens.

The SAVE Act requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to initiate removal proceedings for any individual identified as a noncitizen on voter rolls. However, database matching is an imperfect science. Names can be similar, data entry errors occur, and naturalized citizens may still appear in outdated immigration databases. The result is that citizens who have every right to vote could face not only removal from voter rolls but potential immigration enforcement actions based on erroneous data.

Provision 5: Information Sharing with DHS

What the bill states: Federal agencies must share information with state election officials to verify citizenship status, and states must share unredacted voter rolls with the Department of Homeland Security.

The hidden implications: This represents an unprecedented expansion of federal access to voter registration data. While the bill's proponents emphasize the citizenship verification purpose, the provision raises serious privacy concerns. Unredacted voter rolls contain sensitive personal information, and sharing this data with DHS—a law enforcement agency—creates potential for misuse. Voters may be deterred from registering if they know their information will be shared with immigration enforcement agencies, regardless of their citizenship status.

SECTION II: THE PROBLEM THAT DOESN'T EXIST

The Reality of Noncitizen Voting

Understanding the SAVE Act requires examining whether the problem it claims to solve actually exists. Multiple independent investigations, academic studies, and government audits have consistently found that noncitizen voting in federal elections is extraordinarily rare.

The Statistical Evidence

The Heritage Foundation's own data—compiled by the same organization promoting the SAVE Act—identified just 23 instances of noncitizen voting between 2003 and 2022. This represents a rate of approximately one case per year nationwide, an infinitesimally small fraction of the billions of votes cast during that period.

A Brennan Center for Justice study of the 2016 election examined 42 jurisdictions that collectively represented 23.5 million votes. The study found that election officials reported just 0.0001% of votes were suspected to have been cast by noncitizens. Forty of the 42 jurisdictions reported no known incidents of noncitizen voting.

Utah's comprehensive citizenship review from April 2025 through January 2026 examined more than 2 million registered voters. After a time-intensive, multi-step review process, officials identified exactly one confirmed instance of noncitizen registration—and zero instances of noncitizen voting.

USCIS Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program records show that just 0.04% of voter verification cases are returned as potential noncitizens. Even this tiny percentage likely overstates the actual rate, as Travis County, Texas found that 25% of voters flagged by USCIS as potential noncitizens had already provided proof of citizenship when registering.

Why Noncitizen Voting Is So Rare

The extreme rarity of noncitizen voting is not accidental. The barriers and consequences are severe:

Federal criminal penalties: Noncitizens face up to five years in federal prison for even attempting to register to vote.

Immigration consequences: Any noncitizen who registers or votes faces potential deportation, denial of future visa applications, and permanent bars from naturalization.

Detection systems: States already verify voter eligibility through databases maintained by the Social Security Administration and state motor vehicle departments. The existing system catches registration attempts by noncitizens—often before they ever reach the voter rolls.

Georgia's experience illustrates the system working as intended: A 2022 investigation found 1,634 incidents of noncitizens potentially attempting to register to vote between 1997 and 2022. Every

single one of these individuals was blocked until they could provide proof of citizenship. The system caught the attempts; no votes were cast by ineligible individuals.

The Disconnect Between Problem and Solution

The SAVE Act's draconian measures cannot be justified by evidence of widespread noncitizen voting because no such evidence exists. The bill is a solution in search of a problem—a legislative response to an issue that has been manufactured for political purposes rather than documented through empirical research.

Russell Fry and his Republican colleagues justify the SAVE America Act by claiming it is necessary to prevent noncitizen voting. This claim does not hold up to scrutiny.

Noncitizen voting in federal elections is already illegal. Federal law explicitly prohibits noncitizens from voting in federal elections, and it has for decades. Every state has its own laws reinforcing this prohibition. Election officials across the country — Republican and Democrat alike — have consistently confirmed that noncitizen voting is exceedingly rare and has never been shown to impact the outcome of any federal election.

Current law already requires citizenship affirmation. When a person registers to vote under current federal law, they are required to affirm under penalty of perjury that they are a U.S. citizen and meet all eligibility requirements. This existing requirement is working. The system is not broken.

Documentary proof requirements have a proven track record of disenfranchisement. Multiple studies and court cases have demonstrated that documentary proof-of-citizenship requirements do not prevent noncitizen voting — because noncitizen voting is already vanishingly rare — but they do disenfranchise tens of thousands of eligible American citizens who lack the required documents. In states that have implemented similar requirements, eligible voters have been turned away from the polls in significant numbers.

A Pew Research Center poll found that 83% of Americans support requiring photo ID to vote — but the SAVE America Act goes far beyond a simple photo ID requirement. It demands specific documentary proof of citizenship that millions of Americans simply do not have readily available. Conflating these two very different requirements is a deliberate misdirection.

SECTION III: WHO GETS HURT

The Citizens Who Lack Documentation

The most fundamental problem with the SAVE Act is that millions of eligible American citizens do not have ready access to the documents required to prove their citizenship. This is not a minor inconvenience; it is a barrier that could prevent lawful voters from participating in democracy.

The Numbers

21.3 million American citizens of voting age do not have a passport, birth certificate, or naturalization papers readily available, according to a Brennan Center survey conducted with partner organizations.

9% of all eligible voters do not have or cannot easily access documentary proof of citizenship.

52% of registered voters do not have an unexpired passport with their current legal name.

11% of registered voters do not have access to their birth certificate.

Demographics Most Affected

Married Women

Approximately 80% of American women change their name upon marriage. This creates a documentation nightmare: a woman's birth certificate reflects her maiden name, while her driver's license and other identification reflect her married name. To register to vote under the SAVE Act, she would need to present both her birth certificate and a marriage certificate (or other legal name change document) to prove the connection.

33% of married women lack documents that meet citizenship requirements and reflect their current legal name. Given that married women comprise over a quarter of the electorate, this single demographic could see millions of eligible voters disenfranchised.

Young Voters

24% of voters aged 18-29 reported lacking access to citizenship documentation in the 2020 American National Election Study. Young people are more mobile, less likely to possess passports, and may have birth certificates held by parents or stored in distant locations.

Elderly Voters

14% of voters age 80 and older lack access to documents proving citizenship. Older voters are more likely to have lost or misplaced documents over decades, and they may face physical challenges in retrieving replacement documents.

Hispanic Americans

In Texas and Georgia case studies, Hispanic voters were significantly less likely to have accessible documentary proof of citizenship than Black or White voters. In Georgia, 16% of Hispanic citizens lacked accessible documentation, compared to 10% of Black and White voters. In Texas, the gap was 8% for Hispanic citizens versus 5% for others.

Low-Income Americans

Voters making less than \$50,000 per year are significantly less likely to possess the required documentation than higher-income voters. Those making less than \$30,000 per year face the greatest barriers. Obtaining replacement documents costs money—birth certificates can cost \$20-50, and passports exceed \$100—creating what amounts to a poll tax on participation.

Military Personnel and Their Families

Active duty military personnel and their families move every two to three years on average. Under the SAVE Act, they would need to present citizenship documentation in person at each new duty station. Military IDs alone cannot prove citizenship; service members would need additional documentation showing their birthplace or naturalization status. For troops deployed overseas or stationed in remote locations, this requirement could effectively strip them of their voting rights.

Natural Disaster Survivors

Families who have lost homes and possessions to hurricanes, wildfires, floods, or other disasters often lose important documents in the process. Replacing these documents can take months—even years—during which time survivors would be unable to register to vote. Communities devastated by disasters already face immense challenges; the SAVE Act would add disenfranchisement to their burden.

Naturalized Citizens

Citizens who immigrated to the United States and earned citizenship through naturalization may face unique challenges. Naturalization certificates can be lost, damaged, or stolen, and obtaining replacements requires navigating federal bureaucracy that can take months. More concerning, however, is that naturalized citizens appear in immigration databases that could erroneously flag them as noncitizens, potentially triggering both removal from voter rolls and investigation by immigration authorities.

SECTION IV: LESSONS FROM STATE EXPERIMENTS

Kansas: A Cautionary Tale

Kansas implemented a documentary proof of citizenship requirement for voter registration in 2013, providing a real-world case study of exactly what the SAVE Act would impose nationwide.

The results were devastating:

- More than 31,000 eligible voters were prevented from registering in just two years
- This represented approximately 12% of all registration applications during the period
- Kansas officials conceded in court that over 99% of affected voters were U.S. citizens
- The state's own data showed that noncitizen registration accounted for only 0.002% of registered voters before the law took effect

The courts intervened. A federal court struck down Kansas's law as unconstitutional, noting that it prevented far more citizens from registering to vote than noncitizens. Even Kansas's Republican secretary of state eventually criticized the law's impact.

Arizona: Ongoing Challenges

Arizona has required proof of citizenship since 2004, though its law uses more voter-friendly database verification than the SAVE Act's documentary requirement. Even with this more flexible approach:

- Nearly 250,000 Arizonans are currently blocked from participating in state and local elections
- There is no evidence that any meaningful percentage of these voters are not U.S. citizens
- Most have been registered voters for decades
- The law has been subject to expensive litigation, implementation errors, and data glitches

Arizona's experience demonstrates that even less restrictive versions of citizenship documentation requirements create substantial problems for eligible voters.

Texas: The Dangers of Database Purges

In 2019, Texas attempted to purge voter rolls of suspected noncitizens based on database matching with driver's license records. The results were disastrous:

- Nearly 100,000 people were wrongly identified as potential noncitizens
- Many were naturalized U.S. citizens who had every right to vote
- The acting secretary of state resigned amid the controversy
- Citizens who were wrongfully targeted faced fear, confusion, and potential disenfranchisement

This episode illustrates the dangers of relying on imperfect databases for citizenship verification—a core component of the SAVE Act's approach.

SECTION V: THE POLLING CLAIM

Examining the 71% Number

Congressman Fry's Facebook post cites "71% of Americans support requiring proof of citizenship to vote." This statistic, which appears to come from Heritage Action polling, deserves careful scrutiny.

Problems with the Poll

Source bias: Heritage Action is the advocacy arm of the Heritage Foundation, an organization with a stated ideological commitment to restrictive voting policies. Polls conducted by advocacy organizations should be evaluated with particular care, as question wording and framing can significantly influence results.

Question wording matters: The specific questions asked in polls dramatically affect the answers received. A poll asking "Should only U.S. citizens vote in U.S. elections?" will produce near-universal agreement. A poll asking "Should Americans be required to present a birth certificate or passport in person to register to vote, even if they've been registered for decades?" would likely produce very different results.

The polling in question appears to have asked voters whether they support the SAVE Act, then described provisions in favorable terms without explaining their practical implications. Voters were not asked about:

- The documentation barriers facing married women, seniors, and young voters
- The in-person presentation requirement for mail registration
- The criminal penalties for election officials
- The potential for wrongful voter purges
- The costs to states and localities

The Bandwagon Effect: Presenting polling numbers as a primary argument for legislation—rather than evidence, analysis, or necessity—represents an appeal to popularity rather than a substantive policy case. Policies should be evaluated on their merits, not on whether polling can be crafted to show support.

What More Rigorous Research Shows

When voters are presented with the actual trade-offs involved in documentary proof requirements, support drops significantly. Most Americans value both election integrity and voter access. When

they understand that millions of eligible citizens could be prevented from voting to address a virtually non-existent problem, the policy becomes far less popular.

SECTION VI: THE CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Voters evaluating the SAVE Act should ask the following questions of any elected official who supports it:

Question 1: Where is the evidence?

If noncitizen voting is the problem the SAVE Act claims to solve, where is the evidence of widespread occurrence? Heritage Foundation data shows 23 cases over two decades. The Brennan Center found 0.0001% of votes were potentially cast by noncitizens. Utah's comprehensive audit found one noncitizen registration and zero votes. Why should Congress enact sweeping legislation to address a problem that the evidence shows does not exist at meaningful scale?

Question 2: What about the citizens who will be disenfranchised?

The evidence from Kansas shows that 99% of those blocked by documentary proof requirements are citizens. The Brennan Center estimates 21.3 million citizens lack ready access to citizenship documents. How does preventing millions of citizens from voting protect the integrity of our elections?

Question 3: Why put the burden on citizens instead of government?

The SAVE Act requires citizens to track down and present physical documents—a front-end verification approach that burdens voters. Why not instead enhance back-end verification systems where government databases confirm citizenship automatically? This approach would achieve the same verification goal without creating barriers for voters.

Question 4: How will this affect election administration?

Election officials are already stretched thin, with high turnover and burnout. The SAVE Act imposes new mandates, threatens criminal prosecution for administrative errors, and invites lawsuits from private citizens. How will this improve election administration rather than driving away the experienced personnel our democracy depends on?

Question 5: What will this cost?

The SAVE Act provides no funding to states for implementation. States will need to develop new policies, train staff, verify documents, and manage challenged registrations—all without federal support. How will cash-strapped state and local governments afford these mandates?

Question 6: Why the rush?

The SAVE Act becomes effective immediately upon enactment, giving states no time to prepare. The Election Assistance Commission is required to issue guidance within just 10 days. Major changes to election systems typically take years to implement properly. Why is Congress rushing changes that could destabilize election administration?

SECTION VII: A BETTER APPROACH

If the goal is ensuring that only eligible citizens vote in American elections, there are more effective, less burdensome approaches than the SAVE Act:

Recommendation 1: Enhance Database Verification

Instead of requiring citizens to present physical documents, Congress should invest in improving electronic verification systems. States can verify citizenship through existing databases—including USCIS's SAVE program, Social Security records, and state motor vehicle data—without requiring voters to navigate bureaucracy.

Recommendation 2: Fund Election Administration

The most effective way to ensure accurate voter rolls and secure elections is to provide adequate resources to state and local election officials. The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) established election security grants that have historically enjoyed bipartisan support. Congress should appropriate \$400 million annually to help states modernize systems, improve list maintenance, and enhance cybersecurity.

Recommendation 3: Improve Notice and Cure Procedures

When voters are flagged as potentially ineligible, they deserve meaningful opportunities to correct errors. Instead of automatic removal from rolls, states should place flagged voters in a "challenged" status that allows them to affirm their eligibility before voting.

Recommendation 4: Maintain Existing Safeguards

The current system works. Voters already affirm citizenship under penalty of perjury when registering. States already verify eligibility through existing databases. Noncitizen voting is already illegal and already rare. The problem the SAVE Act claims to solve is already solved through existing law and procedure.

SECTION VIII: The Politics of the Save Act

RUSSELL FRY'S POSITION

Congressman Russell Fry has been an enthusiastic and vocal supporter of the SAVE America Act from the beginning. He voted for it in the House, signed onto the Republican Study Committee's demand that the Senate pass it immediately, and publicly declared: "Election integrity isn't a partisan issue — it's a national responsibility. The SAVE Act protects legal voters, strengthens trust in our system, and defends the principle that only U.S. citizens should vote in U.S. elections. The Senate must move quickly to pass this legislation."

On social media, Fry posted: "We passed the SAVE America Act. No excuses. Now it's sitting in the Senate." He has also posted: "Proving who you are to vote isn't radical — it's basic. 84% of Americans agree. So why is it sitting in the Senate?"

These statements reveal a fundamental misrepresentation of what the SAVE America Act actually does. Fry frames it as simply "proving who you are" — as if it were no different from showing a driver's license at the polls. But the SAVE America Act is not a photo ID requirement. It is a documentary proof-of-citizenship requirement that would force millions of eligible Americans to produce a passport or birth certificate just to register to vote — documents that tens of millions of Americans do not have readily available.

Fry's position also ignores the devastating impact this legislation would have on the very constituents he is supposed to represent. South Carolina's 7th District includes working-class families — communities where passports are far from universal, where rural distances are real, and where the barriers created by the SAVE America Act would fall hardest.

Furthermore, Fry's support for the SAVE America Act stands in direct contradiction to his stated commitment to defending the Constitution. The legislation represents an unprecedented federal takeover of state election administration — the very kind of federal overreach that Fry and his Republican colleagues claim to oppose. As a coalition of state attorneys general noted in a letter to Senate leadership, the SAVE America Act would strip states of their

long-recognized authority over elections, dismantling modern voter registration systems that voters and election officials across the country rely upon. Even Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski called it an example of the "one-size-fits-all mandates from Washington" that Republicans regularly criticize. Even Senator Mitch McConnell, who has long maintained that states should run their own elections without federal intrusion, declined to support the measure.

Fry's support for the SAVE America Act is not about election integrity. It is about political advantage — making it harder for the working people, young voters, rural residents, and married women of South Carolina's 7th District to exercise their constitutional right to vote.

JOHN VINCENT'S POSITION

John Vincent believes in genuine election integrity — the kind that protects every eligible American's right to vote while maintaining the security and accuracy of our elections. His position on the SAVE America Act is grounded in principle, not politics.

John Vincent opposes the SAVE America Act because:

It solves a problem that doesn't exist. Noncitizen voting in federal elections is already illegal and already exceedingly rare. The existing requirement that voters affirm their citizenship under penalty of perjury is working. The SAVE America Act would impose massive new burdens on millions of eligible voters to address a problem that has never been shown to affect election outcomes.

It is an unprecedented federal power grab. The Constitution gives states the authority to administer elections. The SAVE America Act would override state voter registration systems, eliminate online and mail-in registration options that states have developed and that voters rely upon, and impose a one-size-fits-all federal mandate that ignores the diverse needs of different states and communities. This is the kind of federal overreach that should concern every conservative and every defender of states' rights.

It would disenfranchise the people of SC-7. The working families, rural residents, married women, young voters, military service members, and disaster survivors of South Carolina's 7th District would bear the brunt of this legislation's burdens. John Vincent will not support legislation that makes it harder for the people he seeks to represent to exercise their most fundamental democratic right.

It is voter suppression, plain and simple. When legislation is designed in a way that disproportionately burdens specific communities — working-class Americans, people of color, rural voters, young people — and when that legislation addresses a problem that does not exist, the conclusion is inescapable: it is voter suppression dressed up as election integrity.

John Vincent's position is clear: **Every eligible American citizen deserves the right to vote, and that right should not be burdened by unnecessary, costly, and discriminatory documentary requirements.**

THE JOHN R. LEWIS VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT: IN COMPARISON

While Russell Fry supports legislation that would make it harder for eligible Americans to vote, John Vincent supports the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2025 (H.R. 14) — legislation that would restore and strengthen the protections of the original Voting Rights Act of 1965, which was gutted by the Supreme Court's 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*.

What the John Lewis Act Does

The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act restores the preclearance requirement that was the cornerstone of the original Voting Rights Act. Under preclearance, states and localities with a history of voting rights violations must obtain approval from the Department of Justice or a federal court before implementing changes to their voting laws and practices. This requirement was enormously effective at preventing discriminatory voting changes before they could harm voters.

The Supreme Court's *Shelby County* decision effectively gutted preclearance by striking down the formula used to determine which jurisdictions were subject to it. In the years since that decision, numerous states — including several in the South — have enacted voting restrictions that have been found by courts to discriminate against minority voters. The John Lewis Act updates the coverage formula to reflect current conditions, restoring the preclearance requirement for jurisdictions with recent histories of voting rights violations.

Specifically, the John Lewis Act would subject a state and all of its political subdivisions to preclearance for a 10-year period if, during the previous 25 years, 15 or more voting rights violations occurred in the state; 10 or more violations occurred, at least one of which was committed by the state itself; or 3 or more violations occurred and the state administers the elections. Political subdivisions

with three or more violations in the previous 25 years would also be subject to preclearance as separate units.

The legislation also requires states and political subdivisions to notify the public of changes to voting practices, authorizes the Department of Justice to require states to provide documents and information for enforcing voting rights, and outlines factors courts must consider when hearing challenges to voting practices.

Why the John Lewis Act Matters for South Carolina

South Carolina has a long and documented history of voting rights violations. The state was one of the original jurisdictions covered by the preclearance requirement of the 1965 Voting Rights Act — a recognition that its history of racial discrimination in voting required federal oversight. Since the Shelby County decision removed that oversight, South Carolina and other states have been free to enact voting changes without federal review.

The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would restore meaningful federal oversight of voting changes in jurisdictions with histories of discrimination, ensuring that the hard-won voting rights of all South Carolinians — regardless of race, income, or background — are protected.

Fry's Opposition to the John Lewis Act

Russell Fry has not supported the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. His voting record and public positions make clear that he prioritizes legislation that restricts voting access — like the SAVE America Act — over legislation that protects and expands it. This is a telling contrast.

Fry supports the SAVE America Act, which would make it harder for millions of eligible Americans to register to vote. He does not support the John Lewis Act, which would protect the voting rights of Americans who have historically faced discrimination at the polls. The pattern is consistent: Fry's approach to elections is about restricting access, not protecting it.

John Vincent's approach is the opposite. He supports the John Lewis Act because he believes that the right to vote is the foundation of American democracy, and that protecting that right — especially for communities that have historically been denied it — is a fundamental responsibility of every elected official.

THE CONTRAST: FRYING THE VOTERS VS. VINCENT FOR THE PEOPLE

The difference between Russell Fry and John Vincent on voting rights could not be clearer:

| <i>Issue</i> | <i>Russell Fry</i> | <i>John Vincent</i> |
|--|---|---|
| <i>SAVE America Act</i> | Supported — voted for it, demanded Senate passage | Opposed — would disenfranchise millions of eligible voters |
| <i>John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act</i> | Does not support | Supports — restores critical protections for all voters |
| <i>Online Voter Registration</i> | Would eliminate under SAVE Act | Supports — modern, accessible, secure |
| <i>Mail-In Registration for Military</i> | Would eliminate under SAVE Act | Supports — our service members deserve access |
| <i>Automatic Voter Registration</i> | Would cripple under SAVE Act | Supports — keeps rolls accurate and secure |
| <i>Federal Overreach in Elections</i> | Claims to oppose, but supports SAVE Act's federal mandate | Consistently opposes federal overreach that harms voters |
| <i>Noncitizen Voting</i> | Claims it's a widespread problem (no evidence) | Acknowledges it's already illegal and exceedingly rare |

SECTION IX: CONCLUSION

The SAVE Act represents a fundamental shift in how Americans register to vote—one that would create substantial barriers for millions of eligible citizens while addressing a problem that statistical evidence demonstrates is extraordinarily rare. The legislation's supporters cite polling that shows popular support, but polls that ask favorable questions without explaining trade-offs provide little insight into the actual merits of policy.

The SAVE America Act is not about election integrity. It is about political power — specifically, about making it harder for the working people, young voters, rural residents, married women, and minority communities to exercise their constitutional right to vote. Russell Fry's enthusiastic support for this legislation is a betrayal of the people he was elected to represent.

The experience of states like Kansas and Arizona demonstrates that documentary proof of citizenship requirements prevent legitimate voters from participating while doing little to address actual instances of noncitizen voting. The SAVE Act's criminal penalties for election officials, authorization for private lawsuits, and unfunded mandates on states create additional problems that could undermine effective election administration.

Congressman Fry's assertion that "only U.S. citizens should vote in U.S. elections" is unobjectionable as a principle. The question is whether the SAVE Act is the right way to achieve that goal. The evidence clearly shows that it is not. Current law already prohibits noncitizen voting, existing verification systems already catch the rare attempts that occur, and the SAVE Act's approach would disenfranchise millions of citizens to address a problem that barely exists.

Voters deserve better than legislation that manufactures a crisis to justify solutions that would undermine democratic participation. They deserve election policy based on evidence, not ideology—on expanding access for eligible voters, not creating barriers that serve no legitimate purpose.

John Vincent believes that every eligible American citizen deserves the right to vote — not just those who happen to have a passport or can afford to take time off work to travel to a government office with specific documents in hand. He believes that election integrity means protecting the right to vote for every eligible citizen, not erecting barriers that disenfranchise tens of millions of Americans to address a problem that doesn't exist.

The Senate was right to block the SAVE America Act. And the people of South Carolina's 7th District deserve a representative who will stand up for their right to vote — not one who will cheer as that right is taken away.

The fact that Russell Fry is still actively promoting the legislation, leads to further questions about his intentional introduction of uncertainty and chaos into the 2026 midterm elections.

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This backgrounder was prepared by the Vincent for Congress campaign to provide a comprehensive, evidence-based analysis of the SAVE Act. All statistics and claims are derived from authoritative sources including federal courts, nonpartisan research organizations, and government audits.

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