

April 9, 2026

Channel Uncertainty Into Being a Facts-First Communicator

[JUMP TO COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES](#)

With rumors swirling about our upcoming elections, including buzz about federal legislation and an executive order intended to change the way states run elections, you may be wondering about the best way to communicate with voters. As with so many election topics, sticking to the facts is essential.

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Election offices need to be first with the facts to manage voter expectations and demonstrate indisputably their role as voters' trusted source of election-related information.

Below, you'll find tips and links to communications resources and further reading.

In short, now is the time to know what the proposed federal legislation and executive order say, so you can stick to the facts. Now is the time to acknowledge the uncertainty, focus on the certainties of election administration and communicate about your security practices and trusted vote-by-mail programs. Now is the time to identify complexities and recognize potential shortages if any proposed changes were to take root, while communicating the facts about what you do and how elections work in your jurisdiction.

GET STARTED

Know what the proposed bill says. Which bill? For now, experts recommend focusing on the SAVE America Act. Here's a very basic snapshot:

The [SAVE America Act](#) (H.R. 7296/S. 3752) includes all the provisions of the [SAVE Act](#) (H.R. 22/S. 128) — requiring documentary proof of citizenship to be submitted in person to register to vote, essentially eliminating online and mail-in voter registration options; providing individuals with a legal avenue to sue election officials; and pressing election officials to verify voter eligibility using a federal database for public benefits and licensing — and goes further. The SAVE America Act also includes a strict, national photo mandate for in-person and mail-in voting, and requires voters to reaffirm their citizenship at the polls to cast a ballot.

For reference, the [MEGA Act](#) (H.R. 7300) includes all the provisions of the SAVE and SAVE America Acts and goes further. It bans ranked choice voting in federal elections, requires paper ballots for all federal elections, gives the U.S. attorney general federal election administration funding and enforcement authority, eliminates the NVRA’s 90-day “quiet period,” mandates monthly voter roll purges using sources with known errors, requires states without funding to build “a single, centralized, statewide voter registration list,” restricts options for voters who need assistance returning their ballot, eliminates permanent mail-in voter lists and universal vote by mail, and requires that ballots be received by election offices on or before Election Day to count in federal elections.

MORE: See [Issue One’s explainer and comparison chart](#), Notre Dame Professor of Law Derek Muller’s post “[Some musings on the SAVE America Act](#)” on the [Election Law Blog](#) and [NCSL’s 9 Things to Know About the Proposed SAVE America Act](#).

Know what the latest executive order says. At a quick glance, the March 31 executive order would require DHS to compile a list of voters in each state who are eligible to vote in federal elections and require USPS to coordinate with state election officials to create a list of approved mail-in or absentee voters ahead of each federal election much earlier than any state’s current mail ballot application deadline. USPS would only deliver ballots to or from voters on the pre-approved list. And the Attorney General would prioritize investigating and prosecuting election officials who give federal election ballots to individuals who are not eligible to vote in federal elections.

MORE: See [Voting Rights Lab’s section-by-section analysis](#) of the executive order as well as [Monday’s electionline Daily News](#) with expert explanations and updates on early lawsuits to block the order. The [Institute for Responsive Government published this analysis](#) the day the order was issued.

NEXT UP

Acknowledge the uncertainty. Every election office has contingency plans. Officials plan for weather emergencies and power outages when the chance of them occurring is uncertain, even unlikely. Put potential federal legislation and executive orders affecting election administration in perspective, too. Legislation exists but the chance of it affecting upcoming elections is uncertain, even unlikely if it requires 60 votes in the U.S. Senate, and, while we will need to wait for courts to weigh in, legal experts have from the outset described the executive order as unconstitutional.

As with every contingency, assess risks. Plan when you can.

While you may not be able to plan for uncertainty, you don't

want to be caught off guard either. This is why knowing what the bill and executive order say and ensuring your voters know the facts about your safe, secure elections and trusted mail ballot processes is so important.

Of course, stalled federal legislation and unenforceable executive orders do not rule out change. It could surface by way of another bill or a judicial decision, or your state could enact its own version of the SAVE America Act. As with every contingency, assess risks. Plan when you can. And keeping the potential for change in perspective will help us election preparation.

With higher levels of uncertainty than we've experienced in recent elections, communicating with the public is not just important; it's critical.

MORE: In November 2025, NCSL predicted [legislative trends](#)

[for November 2026. Read about the accuracy of their predictions so far in 2026.](#) This month, [Voting Rights Lab described how some state lawmakers are advancing legislation](#) intended to impact who can register to vote, how ballots are cast and when polls are open.

Focus on the certainties. Laws and safeguards already exist to ensure voters verify their eligibility. Federal law already provides a baseline and places limits on how states conduct voter registration list maintenance. States already have laws, rules and tools in place to run secure vote-by-mail programs.

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recent elections, communicating with the public is not just important; it's critical.

Most communications studies show that people need to hear something seven times before it sticks. Rethink your usual election-year press release and social media post cadence. What can you tell voters about existing safeguards and practices starting now? How often can you remind them? Get the facts in front of them to counter the false rumors and unsupported conspiracy theories swirling around proposed federal election legislation and executive branch actions.

MORE: Pick up tips for explaining voter registration list maintenance practices in clear terms from [this NCSL report](#). Need guidance describing safe and secure mail ballot processes? Take a look at this [report from the Bipartisan Policy Center](#) and this [messaging from the Brennan Center for Justice](#).

RESOURCES: These TEG templates may help you communicate with voters about security and vote-by-mail programs.

- [Security Sandwich](#) aka Best Practices for Voting System Security and Accuracy Template
- [Creating an Election Academy for Voter Education: Manual and Materials](#)
- [Mail Ballot Processing Observer Guide](#)
- [Mail Ballot Receiving Observer Guide](#)
- [Mail Ballot Validation Observer Guide](#)
- [Voter Registration List Maintenance Fact Sheet](#)
- [Q&A handouts](#)
- [Voter Registration and Voter List Updates: A Primer](#)
- [Voter Registration & Voter List Updates: How It Works](#) presentation and script

AND THEN

Identify the complexities. The proposed SAVE America Act requires election offices to take on greater responsibility and new processes with no mention of funding. It does not explain who would verify citizenship documentation or when. It would require storage of citizenship documentation within voter registration systems when most are not set up for this. The Act would not only affect voters registering for the first time but also any current voter who moves and needs to update their address or wishes to switch their political party affiliation.

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The March 31 executive order requires DHS, with SSA

assistance, to compile a list of voting-age U.S. citizens living in each state and then provide this list to state officials at least 60 days before each federal election. The order does not explain how states would use the compiled list. States already maintain voter rolls. In short, the order would require states to act against their own election rules and regulations. And, according to the order, DOJ and other federal agencies would be directed to withhold federal funds from states that don't comply with federal laws without indicating which federal funds.

Don't wait: Now is the time for election offices to make sure voters know the facts. They need to know that your state already has strict voter eligibility and registration requirements and that your voter registration lists are routinely maintained for accuracy, security and fairness. They need to know how current federal funding and clear requirements supports your state's elections with clear requirements and. Explain these topics using clear, plain language and be sure to quickly define any election terminology you need to use.

MORE: Election experts and state leaders are describing the complexities. [Connecticut's leadership discussed the potential impact of the SAVE America Act](#) on their state's elections. [PBS News Hour's White House correspondent examined the SAVE Act's prospects and intricacies](#). And the [Bipartisan Policy Center's Five Things to Know About the SAVE America Act](#) highlights election administration complications. This week, [Votebeat examined the multi-state lawsuit](#) filed against the administration that says the March 31 executive order violates the U.S. Constitution. This [Votebeat follow-up piece on the executive order](#) explores the compilation and use of voter lists.

Recogni

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ar that your office will not have the staff, training or

funding

to add processes and make other changes as

proposed in federal legislation and executive order, tell your state's top election official, tell your

elected officials, tell your voters. Be first with these facts. Keep voters in the know to establish and boost trust and increase understanding. Are these audiences aware of how small your staff is and the limits of your budget? Now is the time to ensure these audiences understand the realities of administering elections in your jurisdiction, from security practices to staffing challenges.

The Elections Group is here to help election offices be first with the facts. Do you need tools or templates to be a facts-first communicator? What would you find most helpful? [Let us know what our team can do for yours.](#)

Original link: <https://electionsgroup.com/be-a-facts-first-communicator/>