



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

April 8, 2022

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE SENATE:

I am vetoing Senate Bill 938 in its entirety.

This bill would require the Department of Transportation to facilitate searches in the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system and to mark identification cards such as driver's licenses with a statement warning that the card is not valid for voting purposes.

The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy; it should not be subject to the whim of politicians who do not like the outcome of an election. Elected officials should not be able to abuse their power to cheat or control the outcomes of our elections or to prevent eligible voters from casting their ballots. This legislation is among many that have been sent to my desk during this legislative session, each passed under the guise of needing to reform our election system because elected officials in this state have enabled disinformation about our elections and election processes. I have and will object to each and every effort by this Legislature and its members to undermine our democracy, to erode confidence in our elections, and to demean and harass dedicated clerks, election administrators, and poll workers.

I am vetoing this bill in its entirety because I object to the manner by which it requires the Elections Commission to attempt to validate registered voters' citizenship status. There is no evidence of non-citizens voting in this state. There are current mechanisms in place to ensure that only citizens register to vote, and this bill creates procedures that not only fail to enhance those mechanisms but may inadvertently deprive qualified citizens of their right to vote.

Specifically, the bill directs the Elections Commission to use the SAVE system to verify citizenship for those who register to vote. According to a fact-finding report completed by the Governmental Accountability Board, the SAVE system is essentially a search engine that examines other federal government databases to help determine whether a person is eligible for government benefits. The system is limited to a select group of non-citizens, is not a comprehensive registry, and was not created for determining citizenship status for voting. For example, citizens are sometimes erroneously listed as permanent residents. Because updates are not frequent, it can also contain out-of-date information as to a person's current citizenship status, making it an impractical method of confirming citizenship.

The cumbersome bureaucratic process created in this bill does little to improve the integrity of the election system and increases the risk of disenfranchising a qualified citizen because of inaccurate or outdated federal information that was not collected for this purpose.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Evers
Governor