

Interested Party Testimony on Senate Bill 153 May 27, 2025
Poll Worker Verification of Proof of Citizenship Documents
Would Lead to Widespread Issues

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the General Government Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony for Senate Bill 153. My name is Scott Taylor and I have served as a temporary poll worker in Montgomery County for seven years. During that time I have served as a Precinct Election Official (PEO), Voting Location Manager (VLM) and a Polling Location Supervisor (PLS). I am here today to respectfully raise serious concerns about the provision in SB153 that would require poll workers to verify proof of citizenship documents at polling places.

While I fully support ensuring that only U.S. citizens vote, polling places are not the appropriate time and place for verifying citizenship documents, and would lead to widespread issues at polling sites across the state.

Imposing a new responsibility on poll workers to verify citizenship would disrupt the voting process, create confusion for both voters and workers, and increase the risk of errors – either mistakenly verifying someone’s citizenship or wrongly rejecting valid documents, potentially disenfranchising eligible voters.

Under the Secretary of State’s rule for the November 2024 election, voters flagged with a “Noncitizen” designation on their driver’s license or state ID can cast a regular ballot—rather than a provisional one—if they bring a document – or a copy of a document – showing U.S. citizenship to the polls. While this might seem like a reasonable safeguard, it places an unreasonable burden on temporary poll workers, who are not trained or equipped to verify the authenticity of legal documents.

Most poll workers receive minimal training, limited to a few hours. We are not legal experts, document examiners, or immigration officers. Asking us to review and validate various types of proof of citizenship—documents that may vary over time and contain legal terminology, —is a recipe for confusion and inconsistency.

Expecting poll workers to visually verify citizenship documents will almost certainly lead to:

- Errors in judgment, potentially turning away eligible voters;
- Inconsistent application of the law across counties;
- Longer lines and delays, as verification attempts slow down the check-in process.
- Disputes and legal uncertainty, undermining trust in the electoral process.
- *[And the go-to when you are not sure]* Rubber-stamping any document or copy presented as proof of citizenship.

This responsibility belongs with trained election officials—not temporary workers.

Proposed Solutions:

- Voters whose citizenship status cannot be verified before Election Day should cast a provisional ballot. This ensures that eligible voters can still participate while giving Boards of Elections staff – that should be properly trained in document review – the time and authority to verify citizenship accurately.
- Prohibit poll workers from visually verifying proof of citizenship at polling places. It is both inappropriate and unsustainable to place this responsibility on individuals with limited training [*who might just rubber stamp it*]. Doing so jeopardizes the integrity, consistency and fairness of the voting process.
- Assign all verification of documentary proof of citizenship to permanent, professionally trained Board of Elections officials. Poll workers should focus on their primary role of helping voters cast their ballots efficiently and securely – not interpreting legal documents.

In conclusion, I take great pride in helping my community during elections. But requiring poll workers to verify citizenship documents would make our jobs unmanageable, harm voters, and compromise the integrity of our elections. I respectfully urge this committee to reconsider this provision of SB153.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Scott A. Taylor
Temporary Poll Worker, Montgomery County