



Ranking Member Morelle Opening Remarks at Committee on House Administration Hearing, “Why the Wait? Unpacking California’s Untimely Election Counting Process”

The following remarks were prepared for delivery during the Committee on House Administration Subcommittee on Elections hearing on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. ET. The hearing titled, “Why the Wait? Unpacking California’s Untimely Election Counting Process” took place in room 1310 of the Longworth House Office Building.

Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Steil. Thank you to the witnesses.

I appreciate any effort to improve electoral processes in California—or anywhere in America—but I want to be clear about one indisputable fact:

There is no evidence that California’s recent elections featured any irregularities or fraud.

California’s elections were legal and legitimate.

How do we know?

Because, in November 2024, Republicans deployed election observers to more than half a dozen congressional districts across California.

These observers monitored ballot tabulation and processing operations in California.

They reported ***no*** instances of illegality, or any serious election-related irregularities.

What they reported was California election officials ***following the law***.

And—to be crystal clear—Republicans did not contest the outcome of a *single* congressional race in California under the Federal Contested Elections Act.

To anybody watching this, please understand there is a longstanding mechanism for challenging congressional election results that were improperly decided.

And Republicans did not challenge any congressional result in California.

There is no question—the ballots counted in California, in the period after Election Day, were legally cast by *eligible* American voters.

That is undisputed.

So, this hearing is not about making American elections more secure.

We're holding this hearing because my Republican colleagues simply dislike the way Californians voted.

It's not the procedures Republicans *actually* have a problem with. It's the outcome.

Now, there are ways every election in America could be more efficient.

There is probably room for improvement in California elections—to speed up the process.

Standardizing notice deadlines and ballot cure review across California—these are policies that could possibly streamline elections.

We could be working, in a bipartisan way, to enhance election efficiency.

Instead, Republicans seek to make elections less efficient.

They push policies that increase burdens on election administrators.

Policies that take a sledgehammer to free, fair, and secure American elections.

The SAVE Act, for example, allows *any* person to sue *any* election official, based solely on mere suspicion that a noncitizen has registered to vote.

How quickly will any state, process ballots if election officials are besieged by endless frivolous lawsuits?

And the President's already-deemed illegal anti-voting executive order?

It could lead to the decertification of thousands of voting machines used across the United States.

This deeply harmful executive order could cost states billions of dollars.

It would fundamentally disrupt American elections.

And both the SAVE Act and the President's EO could eradicate voter registration by mail or online.

This would wreak havoc on election administration nationwide—and disenfranchise millions of military and overseas voters who rely on mail and online voter registration to exercise their sacred, inalienable right to vote.

Some proposed Republican policies would harm American elections so much, even prior Republican witnesses at this Committee caution against them. We've had Republican witnesses warn of the inefficiency of processing hand-marked, hand-counted ballots.

Forget about weeks to resolve elections—it would take months! Or years!

Committee Democrats called a witness today to give a voice to military and overseas voters that would be harmed by Republican election policies.

But the record should reflect that our Republican colleagues blocked Democrats' initial witness choice—a military spouse stationed overseas named Sarah Streyder [*straighter*]*—*from appearing today.

Sarah wanted to speak to this Committee about how we can better serve military and overseas voters.

But Sarah is pregnant and unable to travel to Washington.

The Republican majority denied our request for Sarah to testify remotely—something we have the technology to facilitate.

So, because Sarah is a pregnant military spouse who cannot travel to the United States, Republicans blocked her ability to testify.

It is not lost on us that—if the Republican SAVE Act were law today—Sarah would also be unable to register to vote.

The SAVE Act requires in-person voter registration, so women stationed overseas who—like Sarah—cannot travel due to pregnancy would be barred from registering.

Today, this Committee's majority will attack completely legitimate elections in California.

Meanwhile, President Trump and congressional Republicans advance policies to create massive barriers for military voters.

In over two years, this Committee's Republican majority has not held a *single* hearing on military and overseas voters.

Last Congress, this Committee reported—unanimously—a bipartisan bill to support voter access for Americans serving abroad.

The VOTES Act, championed by Congressmembers Frost and Lee, would increase military voter access—unlike the SAVE Act.

Why are we discussing California, rather than military voters?

Democrats would happily waive this Committee's notice requirements to call the VOTES Act up right now, to send it—once again—to the full House.

To defend, rather than undermine, legitimate American elections.

Today, instead of wasting time, can we support military and overseas voters?

Thank you. I yield back.

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