



Subcommittee on Elections Ranking Member Sewell Opening Remarks at Subcommittee on Elections Hearing “Revisiting the 2024 Election with Secretaries of State”

The following remarks were prepared for delivery during the Committee on House Administration Subcommittee on Elections hearing on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. ET. The hearing titled, “Revisiting the 2024 Election with Secretaries of State” took place in room 1310 of the Longworth House Office Building.

Good afternoon, everyone.

As the Ranking Member of the Elections Subcommittee, and Representative of Alabama’s Civil Rights District, there is nothing more important to me than ensuring that every American can cast their ballot.

It was in my hometown of Selma, Alabama – 60 years ago – where John Lewis and hundreds of Foot Soldiers were bludgeoned on the Edmund Pettus Bridge for the right to vote.

However, for the past decade, extremists have fought to undo the hard-won progress that the Foot soldiers fought to achieve. Just last year, lawmakers in 40 states introduced 317 bills to erect new barriers to the ballot box. (Brennan Center)

Since his defeat in the 2020 election, Donald Trump and his Republican allies have pushed the **BIG LIE** of a stolen election. They have even tried to convince the American people of the lie that non-citizens are voting in large numbers and are threatening our elections. And now, they are using that lie as an excuse to pass new laws, like the SAVE Act, that would make it harder for millions of Americans to cast their ballots.

Moreover, Donald Trump just recently signed an executive order that would not only give him unilateral authority to regulate federal elections, but it would open the floodgates for mass voter purges and give Elon Musk unfettered access to sensitive voter files.

The EO and the Save Act also create unnecessary barriers for election workers by withholding funding, and threatening election administrators with five-year prison sentences if they make simple mistakes while trying to register new voters.

Even though the 2024 election was fair and secure, it was marred by threats of violence like the bomb threats that targeted polling locations, election offices, and tabulation centers on Election Day.

However, today's hearing should present a great learning opportunity, because states like Connecticut are leading the charge to expand access to the ballot box. In 2023, Connecticut passed a state level Voting Rights Act to expand voter access.

Sadly, last year, Alabama cared more about enacting laws to criminalize absentee ballot assistance and purged thousands of eligible voters from the rolls.

Alabama is one of only three states in the nation that does not allow early in-person voting, but in Connecticut voters were able to exercise their right 14 days before election day.

Before election day in Alabama, the courts had to prevent Alabama from unlawfully removing thousands of eligible voters from the rolls, because they were wrongfully flagged as noncitizens, in direct violation of the National Voter Registration Act.

Voters in Alabama and every other state should not have fewer options to vote, and they do not deserve to learn on election day that their name has been wrongfully removed from the voter rolls.

As we examine the 2024 election, what we should be addressing are issues such as the chronic underfunding of our elections; the safety and security of our election workers, polling locations, and voters; and expanding access to the ballot box for every eligible American.

We should be honoring their legacy by passing legislation like the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, the Freedom to Vote Act, and the Native American Voting Rights Act.

Trump has no regard for the U.S. Constitution, the rule of law, or the fundamental principal that all Americans, regardless of their race, creed, or color has a right to have their voice heard at the ballot box.

The American people's right to vote is sacred, and I will never stop fighting to protect the cornerstone of our democracy.

Thank you to the Secretaries of State who have joined us today. I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses and the discussion to follow.

Thank you, Chairwoman Lee, and I yield back.

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