



May 21, 2026

The Honorable Joyce Beatty
United States House of Representatives
2079 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3503

The Honorable Shontel M. Brown
United States House of Representatives
2313 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3511

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
United States House of Representatives
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3509

The Honorable Greg Landsman
United States House of Representatives
2244 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3501

The Honorable Emilia Strong Sykes
United States House of Representatives
1217 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3513

Dear Democratic Members of Ohio's Congressional Delegation,

Regarding your May 12 letter about our collaboration with the United States Department of Justice, I appreciate the opportunity to defend our election integrity efforts in Ohio. I make no apologies for partnering with our nation's top law enforcement agency, one of the most respected in the world, to "maintain the accuracy of the statewide voter registration database."¹ No administration in the history of the Ohio Secretary of State's office has done more to detect and deter election fraud than mine, and I will not be

¹ R.C. Section 3503.151(A).

dissuaded by the hyperbolic rhetoric coming from this delegation and its allied interests. Ohioans deserve better from their elected leaders. They also deserve elections they can trust.

Your letter appears to conflate two distinct topics: (1) my office's compliance with a demand from the Department of Justice (DOJ) for Ohio's voter rolls to ensure the state's compliance with federal law and (2) my office's use of the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) system to ensure voter eligibility. Your letter incorrectly claims that we have simply handed over "sensitive data to federal agencies without apparent legal authority, transparency, or safeguards...." That might make for good headlines, but it is entirely false. With respect to the first topic, the Department of Justice demanded Ohio's voter rolls to assess our state's compliance with federal law and for purposes of enforcing the National Voter Registration Act ("NVRA"), 52 U.S.C. § 20501 *et seq.*, and the Help America Vote Act ("HAVA"), 52 U.S.C. § 20901 *et seq.* I cannot speak to how other states responded to the Department on this matter; I can only speak for Ohio. But it is worth noting that the court cases you reference are inapposite. You question whether the DOJ has the right to demand this information; however, the proper question here is whether state or federal law prohibits Ohio from collaborating with federal law enforcement on these matters. They do not.

Let me state emphatically that, under my administration, Ohio will utilize every available resource to enforce the integrity of our elections. I will not get into an exhaustive treatise on the statutory authority to conduct this investigative work, but it is well established. The relevant statutes expressly allow for the disclosure of this information to a state or federal government agency for certain "permissible uses." This specifically includes the types of data in Ohio's voter rolls. I refer you to a 2014 Ohio Attorney General opinion clarifying this requirement in the context of certain public records requests.² I also need to correct the persistent misstatements from you and others regarding the use of Social Security information, which is itself provided by the federal government. You continue to mislead Ohioans by suggesting our voter data includes full Social Security numbers, when it only includes the last four digits of a registrant's number. Other agencies and programs use far more specific data to verify eligibility than what is being used in this context, but you express no concern or opposition.

² <https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/getattachment/c8203034-9171-4771-b938-cd19c43286eb/2014-007.aspx>

Furthermore, it is patently untrue that I did this without transparency. The public—and you—are aware of this because I personally informed an Ohio news outlet of these actions. As your letter states, I have a duty to Ohioans “to ensure their personal information... will be protected, not placed at risk.” No Secretary of State in this office’s history has done more to protect our election infrastructure and its data than I have. But you are naïve to think sensitive data is not exchanged by government agencies every day in pursuit of verification and eligibility. That work is essential to preventing fraud, and each agency has a statutory obligation to secure the data in its possession. You can read the Justice Department’s thorough explanation of its authority in a memorandum opinion issued on May 12, 2026.³

Regarding my office’s use of the SAVE system, maintained by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), this work has been ongoing for several years. Federal law grants the privilege to participate in federal elections only to United States citizens. As such, it is a crime for noncitizens to register to vote or commit the act of voting in federal elections.⁴ Additionally, the Ohio Constitution provides that “[o]nly a citizen of the United States” shall be permitted to vote at any state or local election held in Ohio.⁵ Consistent with this mandate, Ohio law requires that only United States citizens register to vote. It is therefore unsurprising that Ohio uses the federal SAVE system to identify noncitizens as one of many tools to ensure an accurate and up-to-date voter registration list.

I am politically agnostic about this collaboration, as we have now sought access to SAVE verification data from two executive administrations, each affiliated with a different political party. My goal is simple: to have reliable access to citizenship verification data, unencumbered by bureaucratic delays and inefficiencies. I first initiated this access through a Memorandum of Agreement with DHS during the Biden administration, which granted access but imposed impractical limits on our ability to cross-check state voter rolls with alacrity. My office brought litigation against the U.S. government to obtain expanded access to the SAVE system, resulting in a settlement agreement approved by a federal court that guaranteed Ohio free access to citizenship and other federal records for the

³ <https://www.justice.gov/olc/media/1440346/dl>

⁴ 18 U.S.C. §§ 611, 1015(d).

⁵ Ohio Const. art. V, § 1.

next 20 years to verify voter registration eligibility.⁶

We have since worked directly with USCIS to enhance SAVE search capabilities for states that use only the last four digits of a Social Security number for voter verification. This process is working quite well. The SAVE system has already helped Ohio identify 1,154 noncitizens and more than 50,000 deceased registrants on our voter rolls. I will continue to access this critical verification tool in fulfillment of my statutory and constitutional duties. I also should not need to remind members of Congress that thousands of local, state, and federal agencies cross-check sensitive identification records through government databases every day. How do you think the Auditor of State, the Department of Medicaid, the Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation, and the Bureau of Motor Vehicles verify citizenship and other identifying information? Those are just a few of the Ohio-specific examples, not to mention the vast network of law enforcement agencies that access this database. Additionally, my authority to use the SAVE system is codified in Ohio law⁷, which also grants SAVE verification authority to every county agency in the state.⁸ Your hysteria over this routine process is nonsensical and designed to stoke fear among the electorate to score cheap political points. Such tactics amount to voter suppression, pure and simple.

For years, Ohio law has required the Secretary of State to collect confidential identifying information from other state agencies for use in maintaining voter records, including "but not limited to, the department of health, the bureau of motor vehicles, the department of job and family services, the department of medicaid, and the department of rehabilitation and corrections."⁹ State law also authorizes the exchange of confidential identifying records with "other states or groups of states, as the secretary of state considers necessary..."¹⁰ and between "persons or organizations that are engaging in legitimate governmental purposes related to the maintenance of the statewide voter registration database."¹¹ I am not aware of any other time that you have expressed concern about the exchange of this information. Moreover, the performative outrage in your letter appears disingenuous, given your party's recent protests of my decision to leave a multi-state

⁶ See generally *State of Florida, et al. v. U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security, et al.*, N.D. Fla. No. 3:24-cv-00509.

⁷ R.C. 3503.152(B)(1).

⁸ O.A.C Rule 5101:4-7-14.

⁹ R.C. 3503.151.

¹⁰ R.C. 3503.152(C)(1).

¹¹ R.C. 3503.152(C)(2).

data-sharing collaboration.

In 2016, Ohio joined ERIC, which describes itself as a “charity non-profit membership organization.”¹² Six years later, I pulled Ohio out of that agreement because ERIC’s board refused to adopt stronger audit and accountability standards, and Ohio Democrats widely criticized my decision. State Representative Allison Russo called the departure from ERIC a “huge mistake,” the Ohio Voter Rights Coalition said it was “disheartened,” and State Senator Bill Demora heralded ERIC as an “important collaborative tool.” I can provide plenty more citations of Democrats endorsing this exchange of what you call “highly sensitive information” with other states through a nongovernmental organization that operated with limited oversight and little accountability. Not one of you raised a single concern about the ERIC data-sharing agreement, nor asked a single question about its data security protocols. Suddenly, you want to assume the moral high ground on data security simply because the collaboration involves an administration you politically oppose. You were willing to share Ohio’s sensitive voter records with an unaccountable non-profit charity but not with one of the most respected law enforcement agencies in the world. To be blunt, that makes no sense, and I can only assume this has more to do with partisan posturing than with protecting personal information.

Your rhetoric about the use of this voter data to “nationalize” elections also rings hollow. First, we may not always agree on the interpretation of federal election laws, but working with law enforcement to assess compliance with those laws should be a welcome standard operating procedure. This is why I did not oppose the Biden Justice Department sending election monitors into Ohio polling places. Like the oversight of our election administration system, we should welcome bipartisan and, frankly, nonpartisan accountability. Further, two of the signers of your letter voted in 2021 for H.R. 1, which attempted to set federal standards for automatic and same-day voter registration, vote-by-mail, and early voting. It also limited the removal of voters from voter rolls. You simply lack the credibility to lecture anyone about “nationalizing” elections, which was clearly the intent of that legislation.

I note here, too, the irony of Representative Russo’s response to this matter, which was the introduction of an “Ohio Privacy Act” that, in her words, “mirrors the federal Data Privacy

¹² <https://ericstates.org/faq/>

Act." This is a tacit acknowledgment that the federal government already adheres to robust data privacy standards. It is also an implied recognition that the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, the Internal Revenue Service, the Social Security Administration, and many other federal agencies are responsible for handling sensitive information on a daily basis, and that their existing privacy and data security standards are apparently sufficient enough to emulate.

The fact that election fraud is rare in Ohio is a direct result of the work we do to prevent it. Last year alone, 81 contests were decided by automatic recount, with 32 coming down to one vote and 10 ending in ties. A single ineligible vote in any of these elections can spoil the outcome, perhaps fraudulently electing the wrong person or leading to the errant passage or failure of a levy that impacts thousands of citizens.

Public trust is hard to earn and easy to lose. I will not concede the public trust in our elections to the political posturing of partisans who seemingly want me to turn a blind eye to fraud. Your allied special interests have fought me at every turn, filing endless public records requests and litigation to block my efforts to uphold Ohio law. Your letter bears a striking similarity in tone and wording to correspondence I regularly receive from groups seeking fodder to litigate. We have prevailed against these challenges because the law is on our side.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose

Ohio Secretary of State

P.S. - The public records portion of your letter has been sent to my legal staff for fulfillment in accordance with Ohio law.

cc: The Honorable Jim Jordan
Chair, U.S. House Judiciary Committee
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Joseph D. Morelle
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Administration
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mike Carey
Member, U.S. House Committee on Administration
United States House of Representatives