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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0916

June 21, 2012

The Honorable Janet Napolitano
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

As you know, the state of Florida has the responsibility under both state and federal laws to ensure that its voter registration rolls are current and accurate. While the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should be working with Florida to stop voter fraud, it is instead ignoring legitimate requests for information made by the state. The Florida Department of State has identified as many 182,000 registered voters as potential non-citizens, and is working diligently—as required by law—to verify the status of those registered voters.

As part of that effort, in September 2011 the state first requested that DHS provide access to the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) database, which contains the most recent and updated citizenship information available. Since then, the Florida Department of State has made repeated requests for your Department to provide access to that database, without which they cannot properly continue working to maintain accurate voter rolls.

The SAVE database is the most comprehensive collection of information on non-citizens in the United States. Section 2.1 of the Privacy Impact Assessment for the SAVE Program, a document issued by your department, explicitly states that the primary use of SAVE data is to provide immigration status information for any legally mandated purpose to state government agencies. Despite your legal obligation to provide Florida access, your office has refused to grant it.

Other members of President Obama's Administration have raised concerns about the accuracy of the non-citizen list produced by Florida's Department of State; however, of the roughly 100 non-citizens that have been legally removed, not one citizen has been wrongfully removed from the state's voter registration rolls. I would remind you that if accuracy is your concern, the most productive way to ensure the accuracy of our voter rolls and the accuracy of the list of non-citizens produced by the Florida Department of State is for DHS to stop stonewalling legitimate requests and allow Florida access to the SAVE database.

By blocking Florida from utilizing the SAVE database, DHS is actively preventing our state from identifying and removing non- U.S. citizens from the voter rolls. As such, your Department is acting contrary to its own policy and simultaneously preventing the state of Florida from fulfilling its legal obligation to verify that voter registration rolls are current and accurate.

Registering to vote illegally is not only a felony, it undermines our democratic process. Just one ineligible voter casting a vote nullifies the vote of an eligible Florida voter. I am requesting that you grant Florida immediate access to the SAVE database so that the state can continue its endeavor of removing illegal, noncitizen voters from its registration rolls.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Rooney
Member of Congress

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