

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Tom Rooney (FL-16) today sent a letter to Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano urging DHS to allow Florida access to the department’s Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) database, as the Florida Department of State works to verify the eligibility of registered voters.

“For nearly a year, the Department of Homeland Security has blocked Florida from accessing the SAVE database, which contains the most up-to-date citizenship status information we have,” Rooney said. “Florida’s Secretary of State has an obligation under state and federal laws to ensure the accuracy of our voting rolls, and DHS has a legal obligation to assist in that effort by letting Florida access that database.”

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 DHS, explicitly states that the primary use of SAVE data is to provide immigration status information for any legally mandated purpose to state government agencies – including ensuring the accuracy of voter rolls.

“Critics in the Obama Administration of Florida’s effort to prevent voter fraud have claimed they’re concerned about the accuracy of the state’s list – even though more than 100 hundred noncitizens have been properly removed and not one legal voter has been dropped from the list. If accuracy were the real concern, the Administration would provide access to this database immediately to ensure we have the most accurate information possible.

“Since the Administration won’t provide this information, I’m left to conclude that their concerns have nothing to do with accuracy, and everything to do with politics. Registering to vote illegally is a felony, and it undermines our democracy. Is anything more important than politics for this Administration?”

[Click here for a PDF of Congressman Rooney’s letter to Secretary Napolitano.](#)

**Full text of the letter below:**

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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