

March 16, 2026

Dear Governor Larry Rhoden:

The American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota (ACLU of South Dakota) the South Dakota League of Women Voters urge you to veto Senate Bill 175, a bill that requires an individual to provide proof of citizenship when registering to vote and that declares an emergency. SB 175 will potentially disenfranchise thousands of eligible voters in South Dakota who lack easy access to the required documents, such as a U.S. passport or a birth certificate. This bill will also have a heightened impact on eligible senior, youth, women, low-income, and rural voters across the State.

SB 175 places the burden on eligible voters to procure documents that take both time and money to obtain. Notably, the bill will make voting harder for married women and other South Dakotans who have changed their names; these groups will need additional documents to prove their name change, like a marriage certificate, adding extra time and cost to simply register to vote. According to the [Center for American Progress](#), as of 2024, over 200,000 South Dakota women have a birth certificate that no longer matches their current name, the vast majority of whom changed their name after marriage. It would have a similar effect on lower-income voters, young people, seniors, and anyone else who does not travel internationally or who does not have the time or means to obtain a passport or copies of their birth certificate. Indeed, over 60% of South Dakotans—well over half a million people in the state—did not have a valid passport as of 2024. And because SB 175 will go into effect immediately, those impacted by the new law will have limited time to obtain the appropriate documentation before the May 18th voter registration deadline for the upcoming June 2nd Primary Election Day.

SB 175 is a sweeping, significant change to our voting laws that could prevent tens of thousands of citizens from exercising their fundamental right to vote. When Kansas enacted a similar law, 31,000 eligible voters were prevented from voting, and the law was ultimately found to be an [unconstitutional burden on voting rights](#). Non-citizens voting is an issue which is virtually non-existent and already illegal. Moreover, South Dakota's county auditors have effective procedures in place to guard against illegal voting. In addition to the barriers to voting, SB 175 will also impose a burden on auditors and other county employees that is redundant to the processes already in place.



Governor Rhoden, vetoing SB 175 would send a clear message: South Dakota supports voters. This bill makes it harder to participate in elections and undermines democracy. Vetoing this unnecessary bill will help ensure that every eligible vote is counted and will prevent the imposition of unnecessary barriers that will disproportionately affect certain voters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samantha Chapman".

Samantha Chapman
Advocacy Manager
ACLU of South Dakota

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Malone".

Andrew Malone
Senior Staff Attorney
ACLU of South Dakota

South Dakota League of Women Voters