

From: [Benander, Angela \(MDOS\)](#)
To: [Hines, Sherri \(MDOS\)](#)
Subject: FW: MDOS review
Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2025 2:34:31 PM
Attachments: [2024.10 Text Messages.pdf](#)
Importance: High

For possible FOIA respons

From: Benander, Angela (MDOS)
Sent: Thursday, April 3, 2025 11:16 AM
To: Mauger, Craig <CMauger@detroitnews.com>
Subject: MDOS review
Importance: High

Hey Craig – glad we could talk earlier.

Attached are the text messages, I believe we are responding to the FOIA on these later this afternoon. As I said on the phone, we have the legal option to claim a frank communication exemption under FOIA for some of these exchanges, but we have decided to release these in the interest of transparency.

-

Key points for background:

Michigan Department of State has completed a review comparing Michigan driving records (Customer and Automotive Records System – CARS) to the state’s Qualified Voter File (QVF)

- **7.9 million active driving records belonging to Michiganders of voting age**
- **7.2 million active registered voters**
- Noncitizens can legally get driver’s licenses or state IDs in Michigan. They must show proof of legal presence which is verified through the federal SAVE system managed by U.S. Customs
- The vast majority of Michigan voters register to vote through the Secretary of State office when they apply for/renew a driver’s license or state ID **(I’m still trying to find a better number/range for this – will let you know when I do)**

We reviewed two groups of people:

- Those who had voting history recorded in the QVF for November 2024 General Election and were also recorded as showing a noncitizen document for a CARS transaction after that election
- Those who voted in November 2024, were recorded as a noncitizen in CARS, and it had been several years since they were required to provide proof of legal presence for a CARS transaction

This review **found 15 people who allegedly cast a ballot in the November 2024 General**

Election and appear to be probable noncitizens.

- **13 referred to AG** for further investigation/action
- 1 had died since casting their ballot in November (not referred to AG)
- 1 in the process of further investigation by MDOS Office of Investigative Services (OIS) for possible other fraudulent voting activity
- These numbers are right in line with those of other states that have conducted similar reviews (OH, GA, IA)
- While we can't share details of each voter/instance that are still under investigation, **these instances appear to be scattered, isolated votes not largely concentrated in specific counties or jurisdictions**

These results bear out what data has consistently shown: **noncitizen voting is extremely rare**

- Combined with the single case reported last year of a Chinese national allegedly illegally voting in Ann Arbor, 16 votes out of more than 5.7 million cast – **0.00028% of all votes**

We did many rounds of review, making sure the person actually voted and working to verify their citizenship status. **In many cases, the review found that the person was, in fact, a U.S. citizen legally entitled to vote in 2024** - highlights the need for these reviews to be done carefully and deliberately

We have established an ongoing review process to identify possible cases of noncitizens registering to vote. These reviews must be done very carefully and require very thorough investigation. We are working with legislators to introduce a Michigan Election Security Act which will include a provision to codify this review process so it will be required of this department and future administrations.

Quote from me:

This is a serious issue, but we have to address it with a scalpel not a sledgehammer. We believe it's the government's job to verify voter citizenship – this review shows we can do that without saddling citizens with expensive and burdensome requirements. Instead of failed policies that block U.S. citizens from legally casting their ballot we will continue to work with lawmakers on ways to improve the system while ensuring that Michigan's elections are highly secure, fair, and accessible.

Question: Why haven't we done this before?

These reviews must be designed and conducted very carefully. This was a very labor-intensive process involving dozens of staff members and requiring thorough investigation at multiple stages.

Prior to this review, the department was dedicating very scarce staff resources to implement a major overhaul of our election system as passed by Michigan's voters under Proposal 2 of 2022. Once that

process was complete, we were able to address rampant speculation and misinformation claiming large numbers of noncitizens are regularly casting ballots in our elections. The results of this review provide further evidence that's in line with previous findings from other states and nationally – noncitizen voting is very rare.

Now that this process is in place, it will be easier for us to quickly identify and investigate any suspected instances of a noncitizen attempting to register or vote and we are working with legislators on a bill that would codify this practice moving forward.

Please let me know if you have additional questions, if I forgot anything, or if you need anything else!

Angela Benander

Chief Communications Officer
Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson
Michigan Department of State
517.242.9192
BenanderA1@michigan.gov