

U.S. citizens who apply for a Michigan driver's license are automatically registered to vote, unless they choose to opt out.

While noncitizens who are "legally present" in the country can apply for a driver's license too, multiple safeguards exist to prevent them from registering to vote.

Under current [Michigan law](#), a person must provide documents showing their citizenship status – such as their birth certificate, social security number or passport – in order to obtain their license or state ID.

The Secretary of State's [computerized license application system](#) only allows U.S. citizens to become registered voters.

The system prevents voter registration for people providing noncitizen documents, said Michigan Department of State spokesperson, Angela Benander. Employees cannot manually override the system and must complete

checks to ensure noncitizens have not been accidentally registered to vote.

Automatic voter registration was written into the Michigan Constitution as part of the 2018 [“Promote the Vote”](#) ballot proposal and [expanded](#) by lawmakers late last year. A [report](#) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Election Lab shows similar laws exist in nearly half the states.

According to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#), automatic voter registration laws remove barriers to voter registration and improve election accuracy. Opponents say voters are provided insufficient notice of how they can opt out.

To further safeguard against noncitizen voter registration, the Michigan Legislature recently approved an [amendment](#) to send registered voters a mail notice in 2025 that explains voter eligibility requirements and cautions that

individuals must decline voter registration if they are not eligible to vote.

[Attempted voting](#) by noncitizens is illegal in Michigan. It's also extremely rare nationwide, according to a study by the Brennan Center for Justice. In the 2016 general election, about [30 noncitizens](#) were suspected of trying to vote, a tiny fraction of the 23.5 million total voters.

But with illegal crossings at the country's southern border reaching [all-time highs](#), some Republicans have raised the specter of noncitizens voting and promoted legislation to try to tighten related rules.