

You are currently viewing the printable version of this article, to return to the normal page, please [click here](#).

Obama amnesty creates loophole for illegal immigrants to vote in elections

Driver's licenses, social security numbers facilitate improper registration, officials warn

By [Stephen Dinan](#) - *The Washington Times* - Thursday, February 12, 2015

President Obama's temporary deportation amnesty will make it easier for illegal immigrants to improperly register and vote in elections, state elections officials testified to Congress on Thursday, saying that the driver's licenses and Social Security numbers they will be granted create a major voting loophole.

While stressing that it remains illegal for noncitizens to vote, secretaries of state from Ohio and Kansas said they won't have the tools to sniff out illegal immigrants who register anyway, ignoring stiff penalties to fill out the registration forms that are easily available at shopping malls, motor vehicle bureaus and in curbside registration drives.

Anyone registering to vote attests that he or she is a citizen, but Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted said mass registration drives often aren't able to give due attention to that part, and so illegal immigrants will still get through.

Kansas Secretary of State Kris W. Kobach said even some motor vehicle bureau workers automatically ask customers if they want to register to vote, which some noncitizens in the past have cited as their reason for breaking the law to register.

"It's a guarantee it will happen," Mr. Kobach said.

Democrats disputed that it was an issue at all, saying Mr. Obama's new policy, which could apply to more than 4 million illegal immigrants, doesn't change anything in state or federal law.

Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, the District of Columbia's nonvoting member of Congress, accused Republicans of an effort at voter suppression.

"The president's executive order gives immigrants the right to stay — immigrants who have

been here for years, immigrants who have been working hard and whose labor we have needed," Ms. Norton said. "The Republicans may want to go down in history as the party who tried once again 100 years later to nullify the right to vote. Well, I am here to say they shall not succeed."

Rep. Stephen F. Lynch, Massachusetts Democrat, said he doubted illegal immigrants would risk running afoul of the law — which could get them deported — just to be an insignificant part of an election.

The hearing was the latest GOP effort to dent Mr. Obama's executive action, announced in November, which grants tentative legal status and work permits to as many as 4 million illegal immigrant parents whose children are either U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents. The president also expanded a 2012 policy for so-called Dreamers, or illegal immigrants brought to the U.S. as children, granting them tentative legal status and work permits as well.

Republicans say there are a host of unintended consequences, including the chances of illegal voting, a perverse incentive created by Obamacare that would make newly legalized workers more attractive to some businesses than American workers and complications with the tax code.

The newly legalized workers can apply for back refunds from the IRS even for years when they didn't file their taxes, agency Commissioner John Koskinen told Congress on Wednesday.

Mr. Koskinen said the White House never spoke with him about potential consequences before Mr. Obama announced his policy changes. The secretaries of state who testified to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on Thursday said they too never heard from Mr. Obama ahead of time.

Mr. Husted has written the Obama administration asking for help in identifying the name and date of birth of all noncitizens who get Social Security numbers, which he said would allow states to go back and clear illegally registered voters from their rolls.

He said the administration hasn't responded.

"Why I wrote the letter is I want to comply with federal law," he said.

Matthew Dunlap, Maine's secretary of state, said he believed the laws already on the books are good enough to stop any voting mischief in his state, and he doubted illegal immigrants had incentive or intent to try to interfere with U.S. elections.

"My experience is they don't come here to vote, and they don't come here to drive. They come

here for a better life," he said.

Mr. Kobach countered with a story about a legal permanent resident who had not yet become a citizen but who registered and voted nonetheless, and who said she wanted to support candidates who would help her earn citizenship faster.

Only four states require proof of citizenship before someone registers to vote, Mr. Kobach said. And even in those states, the federal government offers voter registration cards that don't require proof of citizenship, giving determined illegal immigrants a way to circumvent checks.

© Copyright 2015 The Washington Times, LLC. [Click here for reprint permission.](#)