



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

AGHOGHO EDEVBIE
DEPUTY SECRETARY

Testimony of Aghogho Edevbie, Michigan Deputy Secretary of State

Before the Committee on Homeland Security Shadow Hearing

April 28, 2026

Ranking Member Thompson, members of the committee—thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Aghogho Edevbie, and I serve as Michigan’s Deputy Secretary of State.

Over the last 16 years, I have worked to protect and strengthen our elections. Sometimes that meant sitting in a polling place, making sure voters in a single precinct could cast their ballots. Other times, it meant working with broad coalitions to enshrine voting rights in our state constitution. No matter the role, the mission has been the same: to ensure every eligible citizen can participate in our democracy.

And we have made real progress. Thanks to the passage of nonpartisan ballot initiatives, we successfully expanded options for Michigan voters. Millions of Michiganders now have access to voting by mail, early voting, and same-day registration. Michigan was the only state to see an increase in youth voter turnout from 2020 to 2024. We’ve set turnout records in three consecutive statewide elections.

These are not abstract achievements—they are the product of a system that is accessible and secure, one that was built by and for Michigan citizens.

For years, we carried out this work with the confidence that the federal government would support us as we administered elections on behalf of the people of Michigan. But as a result of the lies about our elections, the gutting of federal support, and the threats to our election workers, that confidence has been destroyed.

The President has repeatedly threatened the foundations of free and fair elections and rejected what our constitution has made clear for over 200 years: that states, not the federal government, and certainly not the president, run elections.

Just two weeks ago, the Department of Justice sent Wayne County an unlawful letter demanding ballots and other election materials – a letter void of research, merit, and any basic understanding of the law.

The DOJ’s error-riddled letter is full of mistakes that a first-year law student wouldn’t make. Off the bat, the letter itself is addressed to the wrong entity. Under Michigan law, dating back at least sixty years, counties do not maintain possession of ballots – cities and townships do.

In this letter, the DOJ also cites and relies on a lawsuit that a Republican-appointed judge had already dismissed as “incorrect and not credible,” and cited three isolated fraud cases that were, in fact, caught by local election officials following established procedures. In each instance, the system worked exactly as it should: misconduct was detected, investigated, and prosecuted.

The incompetence of this Administration, mixed with its determination to bludgeon and intimidate anyone who disagrees with it, poses a grave danger to our country. The President’s most recent executive order on elections is the latest example: it won’t prevent fraud – but it will prevent millions of eligible U.S. citizens from voting, while causing chaos, confusion, and sowing doubt among voters about the security of their ballots. And that’s by design.

At the same time, this executive order also goes after election clerks. These Michiganders—many of whom serve part-time with limited resources—have faced threats, shrinking budgets, and now from the President, the prospect of criminal charges. It is no surprise that turnover has increased: in 2024, 36% of election officials in Michigan were different from those who ran the 2020 election; national turnover was 41%.

These challenges are compounded by reduced federal support for election security. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (or CISA), created to protect our elections from attacks and foreign interference, has been gutted by this administration. As a result, states are being asked to shoulder more responsibility for the security of our elections with fewer resources.

But in Michigan, we’re resilient. Teachers, small business owners, faith leaders, and more are still signing up to help their friends and neighbors cast their votes. Nearly 60% of our new election officials have prior professional experience in elections. When we say states run elections well, it’s largely due to our dedicated election officials who also refuse to be intimidated by this administration.

We will continue to defend Wayne County, our local clerks, and any other election workers the DOJ tries to threaten. We’re not just resilient – we’re ready to stand up for our voters, our rights, and our freedom to run our own elections. Make no mistake – Michigan will run Michigan’s elections this year.