



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on July 24, 2026

DOJ Pressures State Election Officials Regarding Noncitizen Voting

On July 7, Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon, head of the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Civil Rights Division, [sent letters](#) to all 50 states and the District of Columbia warning that state and local election officials could face criminal prosecution if they knowingly leave noncitizens on voter rolls or allow them to receive or cast ballots in federal elections.

The [letters](#) demanded a response within five days explaining how each state intended to comply with federal voter-eligibility laws, and warned that "any election officer, including the chief election officer of the state, who knowingly retains noncitizens on the state's statewide voter registration list or facilitates noncitizens in receiving and casting ballots could be subject to criminal liability."



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The DOJ also [announced](#) it is dispatching election monitors to jurisdictions in six states — Arizona, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and Virginia — ahead of upcoming primary elections.

States Pushing Back

Legally, the DOJ's [voter-roll crusade](#) has [not been gaining traction](#) in court. The department has [lost 11 district court cases](#) and its first appeal in efforts to force states to turn over unredacted voter data. No court has ordered a state to hand over unredacted statewide voter rolls. The criminal-threat letters represent a tactical shift after these repeated judicial defeats.

Utah's Republican Lieutenant Governor Deidre Henderson expressed open [frustration](#): "Got another love letter this morning from the DOJ sprinkled throughout with threats of criminal prosecution," she wrote. "I'm sure I'm not the only chief election officer of a state who is being targeted for following state and federal laws."

Election-law expert David Becker, a former DOJ voting-rights lawyer, [called the bluff](#): "If you really thought they committed a crime, you wouldn't be sending them a letter." Plus, "the election officials I've spoken with aren't intimidated, and are seeing these empty threats for what they are."

States' Responsibility

What the DOJ is now doing — threatening state officials with criminal prosecution, conditioning Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) terrorism-prevention funding on election compliance, and



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dispatching federal monitors into state-run elections — is federal coercion of state election administration, regardless of the stated rationale.

A constitutionalist concern about noncitizen voting is entirely legitimate. The constitutional method for addressing the problem is [state-based](#) action — not a Washington-centered solution that may be a Trojan horse for murkier agendas.

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