



Written by [Rebecca Terrell](#) on July 6, 2026

Trump Blows Up Midterm Strategy Over Failed Election Bill

Two stories converged recently to highlight one of the most important constitutional questions heading into November: Who controls American elections? (The Constitution's answer is unambiguous: the states.)

On June 25, a [federal judge](#) in Boston [blocked](#) President Donald Trump's administration from enforcing key portions of its [executive order](#) imposing new requirements on mail-in voting, preventing implementation of directives requiring federal agencies to compile voter citizenship lists and directing the U.S. Postal Service to limit which mail-in ballots get delivered.



AP Images

The ruling was not surprising. The [Elections Clause](#) gives state legislatures, not the president, primary authority over federal election administration. A president unilaterally directing the Postal Service to override state-administered ballot systems is not a legitimate exercise of executive power, the court opined.

Ironically, such measures of election-integrity protection are now threatening to cost Republicans their congressional majorities.

Holding a Housing Bill Hostage

President Trump this week abruptly canceled the planned signing of a [bipartisan housing bill](#) — which passed the Senate 85-5 — declaring he would only sign it after Congress passed the [SAVE America Act](#). Republican senators were openly bewildered. Senator John Cornyn (R-Texas) [called](#) the move “inexplicable,” while Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) [said](#) it “makes no sense.” Senator Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) was [more direct](#): “I don’t know why you’re holding a bill that’s ready for signature hostage over a bill that will never pass this Congress.”

Republicans have 51 votes for the SAVE America Act, but need 60 to overcome a filibuster. Democrats are unanimously opposed. The bill has already failed on the Senate floor.

The SAVE America Act's supposed objective — verifying citizenship before voter registration — has a superficially appealing logic, but it amounts to an [unconstitutional power grab](#). Nevertheless, Trump has [doubled down](#), repeatedly [insisting](#) that “a state is an agent for the federal government in elections” — a claim that is constitutionally upside-down. States are not federal agents in elections. They are sovereign entities exercising authority the Founders explicitly reserved to them.



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Squandering Political Capital

Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.D.) [acknowledged](#) the obvious: “The reason people want to vote for Republicans in the midterms is obviously going to be about the economy.” Yet the party is spending its remaining pre-midterm capital on a conflict in Iran that is precipitating inflation and hurting average Americans (with critics claiming that it is risking a global depression to advance the interests of a foreign country). Trump tried to redirect attention to election integrity, but courts are striking down his executive orders.

Pundits note that, without support from his own party and with the courts solidly allied against the administration, Trump is squandering political capital and may be handing Democrats what they need in November.

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