

## Democratic Presser on Trump's First Year

February 24, 2026

### Remarks by Sen. Cantwell and Washington Secretary of State Steve Hobbs

[Sen. Cantwell: [VIDEO](#)] [Sec. Hobbs: [VIDEO](#)]

**Sen. Cantwell:** Thank you, Amy, and thank you for organizing this today. We all know that the administration has already mis-stepped in trying to take over rights that don't belong to [them], in the tariffs. Certainly in sending Homeland Security to threaten the free speech of Minnesotans and now in an executive order and pushing the SAVE [America] Act, the franchise of American citizens.

Millions of Americans will have to pay to prove their citizenship if they want to vote, under Donald Trump's proposal. A passport can cost \$165. In Washington a replacement of a birth certificate is somewhere between \$28 and \$51, and voters will have to travel to do more paperwork and stand in longer lines.

He is basically threatening to nationalize the elections. This is unconstitutional. We know that in our state, people vote by mail, and it has been a secure system, and we have very, very little voter fraud. We are talking about one ten-thousandth of 1%. That is what the fraud has been.

The Brennan Center has been accurate in saying the number of cases, just 30 cases out of 23 million votes cast. Meanwhile, the SAVE [America] Act, if enacted, would disenfranchise over 21 million Americans who are eligible to vote now, but all of a sudden, would have to prove their [citizenship] to actually get their ballot or vote at a polling place across the United States.

The Heritage Foundation found over a 40-year period since the 1980s [an] average of only one fraudulent ballot cast every three years in the State of Washington. That is why I invited [Washington] Secretary of State Steve Hobbs. He knows how our election system is there to catch fraud. He knows that you have to be a United States citizen to vote, and that is why your signature on every ballot is there to attest to that. The review work that is done are trained by the Washington State Patrol. So literally, the citizenry of the United States, in our state of Washington, help review the ballots and the accuracy of these ballots, and so to say all of a sudden that we're going to pass a new law disenfranchising millions of Americans, because simply, the President believes that there are people who are non-US-citizens wanting to vote, I think is inaccurate.

We know that people are here, like the League of Women Voters, who are articulate about the fact they do not support the SAVE [America] Act. We know that there are Republican former Secretary of State in our state who do not support the SAVE [America] Act. We know that there are individuals who are fighting right now to try to instead get the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, so that we actually can fight that -- and in our state, if we really do want to fight the terrorism at the polling place, figure out who blew up a voting box in Vancouver, Washington, where we had one of the closest elections -- or stop the kind of activities that [malign] foreign interests are doing to actually interfere with our elections.

But trying to say that the United States needs to pass the SAVE [America] Act -- doesn't save us money [and] doesn't save us from any real problems. Instead, it costs Americans and it creates more red tape. So I'd like to introduce our Washington Secretary of State, Steve Hobbs. Steve?

**Steve Hobbs, Washington Secretary of State:** Thank you, Senator. Look, the SAVE [America] Act -- it doesn't save anything. The bill disenfranchises voters and leaves our democracy even more vulnerable. The administration is more focused on tilting at windmills, on the myth that has already been disproven many times. You heard it from the Senator who told you about a conservative think tank that gave the example of not many people are non-citizens that are voting.

If this administration was serious about elections, you know what they would do? They would restore the funding and support which they cut last year to programs to defend our elections from constant cyberattack and disinformation campaigns from overseas actors. Hire back the cybersecurity experts and professionals that supported our elections.

Right now, states and counties, they have to step up to the plate. They have to fund these programs that have been left behind by this administration cutting. And when funding is actually given and actually the federal government is a helpful partner, we become a united front against these attacks. For example, in 2023 one of our counties were hit with a pretty substantial cyberattack, taken out for 120 hours. Because Homeland Security was there for us, they notified my office, we notified the county, and we are able to restore that county back to operation and disconnect our voter database, because nation-state actors will do everything they can to get to that voter database.

In 2024 a disinformation campaign from a nation-state actor. Again, we worked with Homeland Security to report this. In 2024 again, we had two ballot boxes blow up, one of them in Oregon. Again, the coordinated effort of the federal government and US Postal Service, we able to get those voters that had their ballots blown up, their replacement ballot so they would have a voice in this election. And the white powder incident that happened last year, in 2024, as well. Because of the coordinated effort, we were able to intercept these envelopes with white powder in other states, because we worked together, because the funding was there.

This year, we're already seeing what's happening. Already homegrown attacks, white powder happening in two counties this year. I guarantee you that nation-state adversaries, like Russia, they're not going to let up on their cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns. The SAVE [America] Act addresses none of these real, documented threats to our elections.

In addition, the Postal Service changed the way they do postmarks, and they hinder vote by mail states like my own. My own son and wife's ballot[s] got rejected. Now, luckily, our state stepped up to the plate, and we're putting the word out to make sure you vote early in the mailbox, or put it in the ballot drop box by Tuesday. Luckily, we're getting the word out, and I'm very grateful to Senator Cantwell and the Democratic Senate leadership for allowing us to have a voice here today, because all Secretaries of State, Republican and Democrats -- we are very concerned about this cutting of our support to elections.