

Democrats, voting groups prep lawsuits against Trump's 'unconstitutional' mail ballot order

Jonathan Shorman
Oklahoma Voice

Democrats and other opponents of President Donald Trump's executive order clamping down on mail ballots prepared Wednesday to challenge the directive, signaling the start of another fight between states and the White House over elections.

The order, which would create a national list of voting-age American citizens and directs the U.S. Postal Service to place limits on mail-in ballots, constitutes an extraordinary and illegal attempt by Trump to intervene in the voting process, election experts said. "The executive order is unconstitutional and I think it is very likely that it will be struck down," Colorado Democratic Secretary of State Jena Griswold said in an interview. She said her state would join litigation against the order.

Several Democratic election officials issued similar statements. Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fontes said he would meet the federal government in court, while Nevada Secretary of State Francisco Aguilar said "we look forward to our day in court challenging this illegal action." Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows said her state was "not going to obey in advance" because the states, not Trump, are in charge of elections.

Advocacy groups also promised lawsuits. The Campaign Legal Center said it would challenge the order with its partners, the Democracy Defenders Fund, the League of United Latin American Citizens and other organizations.

"We are drafting the lawsuit right now," Campaign Legal Center said on social media late Tuesday.

In Nebraska, Republican Secretary of State Bob Evnen downplayed the possibility of immediate changes to his state's elections, while praising Trump for prioritizing election integrity. Nebraska will hold a primary on May 12.

"Over the coming months, we will continue to monitor and participate in how the implementation of the

executive order might impact the November 3rd general election," Evnen told Nebraska Examiner.

Tens of millions of Americans vote by mail in federal elections, underscoring the stakes of any major restrictions on voting by mail. About 30% of voters cast mail ballots in 2024, according to data gathered by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.

Another elections challenge Opponents of Trump's election-related moves have a good track record in court.

Trump's first order on elections, issued just over a year ago, attempted to require voters to prove their citizenship. While Congress is debating the SAVE America Act, which would implement similar requirements, federal courts found that the president had overstepped his authority when he attempted to impose changes unilaterally.

Nearly 30 states are also fighting U.S. Department of Justice lawsuits seeking to force them to turn over copies of voter lists containing sensitive personal information on voters. Three federal judges have so far ruled against the Trump administration.

State administration of elections is a fundamental feature of American democracy, spelled out in the U.S. Constitution. States run and regulate elections, but Congress — not the president alone — can override states and set national standards.

At a basic level, critics of Trump's executive order argue it tramples on state authority and bypasses Congress.

"Once again, the President is attempting to act beyond his powers and seize control of our elections. Now he is attempting to weaponize the United States Postal Service against the voters. We will not stand for it," U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, the ranking Democrat on the House Homeland Security Committee, said in a statement.

"This will help a lot" Trump cast the executive order as a necessary step in support of election integrity when he signed it during an Oval Office event on Tuesday. He

acknowledged it would likely face legal challenges but called it "foolproof."

Trump, who has long called the 2020 election stolen, falsely asserted that elections have been marked by significant fraud, saying the order was aimed at "stopping the massive cheating that's gone on." In fact, instances of noncitizen voting are extremely rare.

"I think this will help a lot with elections," Trump said.

The order requires the Department of Homeland Security, with help from the Social Security Administration, to compile a list of voting-age U.S. citizens living in each state and then provide that information to state officials at least 60 days before each federal election. The order does not tell states how to use the data, but it instructs U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi to prioritize investigations into state and local officials who issue federal ballots to ineligible voters.

The list of citizens will be drawn from naturalization and Social Security records, according to the order. It will also include data from SAVE, a powerful computer program maintained by Homeland Security that verifies citizenship by checking names against information in federal databases.

The Trump administration has been encouraging states to run their voter rolls through SAVE to identify potential noncitizens, but some election officials say it wrongly flags Americans as noncitizens. Several voting rights and civic groups have sued over Texas' use of SAVE.

The Justice Department confirmed last week that it will share voter data it obtains with Homeland Security. At the same time, DOJ lawyers have been adamant in court that the Trump administration isn't creating a national voter registration list.

"And yet here is an executive order that very overtly and expressly directs DHS to create that national voter database," David Becker, executive director of the nonpartisan Center for Election Innovation & Research, told reporters on Wednesday.

Postal Service involvement questioned The order directs Postmaster General

David Steiner, who was named to the role by USPS's Board of Governors last year, to require every outbound mail ballot be in an envelope that includes a tracking barcode.

At least 90 days before a federal election, states must notify the U.S. Postal Service whether they intend to allow ballots to be sent through the mail. States would then have to submit to USPS a list of voters planning to vote by mail at least 60 days before the election.

"What the president is doing today is he's going to make sure mail-in ballots are safe, secure and accurate," U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told reporters on Tuesday.

Trump's effort to enlist USPS in election administration goes against the agency's own policies. When the Postal Service updated its rules last year, it noted that it does not establish or deadlines for elections, or determine how the mail is utilized for elections.

USPS spokesperson Cathy Purcell said the agency was reviewing the executive order.

The order is a "structural inversion" of how mail voting works, said Pamela Smith, president and CEO of Verified Voting, an organization that promotes the responsible use of technology in elections. USPS delivers mail and isn't involved in distributing ballots, she said.

"It is not up to the Postal Service to have this gatekeeping role over ballot delivery," Smith said.

Under the order, the Justice Department and other federal agencies would be directed to withhold federal funds from states and localities that don't comply with federal laws. It doesn't specify what federal funds would potentially be targeted or whether states could lose election-related dollars.

States receive minimal federal election security grant funding each year from the Election Assistance Commission. During the 2025 fiscal year, the EAC distributed \$15 million total, which can be used for upgrades to voting systems, cybersecurity, training and other needs.

"Even if it were to come to pass," Smith said, "I don't think it would carry much weight as a stick."

Legals

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF CUSTER COUNTY, OKLAHOMA COURTHOUSE, ARAPAHO, OKLAHOMA

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF LARRY D. RATZLAFF, Deceased.

NOTICE OF HEARING FINAL ACCOUNT, PETITION FOR DISTRIBUTION AND DETERMINATION OF HEIRSHIP PB-2025-109

Notice is hereby given that Catherine J. Seifried, Personal Representative of the Estate of Larry D. Ratzlaff, deceased, having filed in this Court her final account of the administration of said estate, and her Petition for distribution of said estate and determination of heirship, the hearing of the same has been fixed by the Judge of said Court for the 27 day of April, 2026, at 11:30 o'clock a.m., in the Courtroom of said Court in the County Courthouse in Arapaho, Oklahoma, and all persons interested in said estate are notified then and there to appear and show cause, if any they have, why the said account should not be settled and allowed, the heirs of Larry D. Ratzlaff, deceased, determined, and said estate distributed.

Witness my hand this 2 day of April, 2026.

/s/Dana J. Hada
Judge of the District Court

M. L. MINTON, III, OBA #6255
Attorney for Personal Representative
P. O. Box 648

Weatherford, OK 73096 (580) 772-5546

(Published in the Weatherford Daily News April 4 and 11, 2026) LPXLP

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF CUSTER COUNTY, OKLAHOMA COURTHOUSE, ARAPAHO, OKLAHOMA

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF WILLIAM EDWARD HARRIS, Deceased.

NOTICE OF HEARING PETITION FOR LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION AND DETERMINATION OF HEIRSHIP PB-2026-21

The State of Oklahoma to:

The heirs, next of kin, and creditors of William Edward Harris, Deceased.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that Saul Harris III of Palm Bay, State of Florida and Denise Sprinkle of Thomas, Oklahoma, have filed a Petition in the County Court of said Custer County and State praying that Letters of Administration on the Estate of William Edward Harris, deceased, be granted and issued to Saul Harris III and Denise Sprinkle, and for a determination of the identity of all heirs, devisees and legatees.

YOU ARE FURTHER NOTIFIED that said petition will be heard and determined on the 27th day of April, 2026 at 11:30 o'clock a.m. of said day, in the Courtroom of said

Court, in the Courthouse of said Custer County, at which time and place any person interested in said estate may contest said petition, file written objection thereto, and show cause, if any there be, why the prayer of said Petitioners should not be granted.

FURTHER, that the Court make a determination of the identity of all heirs, devisees and legatees for purposes described in Title 58 O.S. §240 et sec.

Witness my hand and seal of said Court this 2nd day of April, 2026

/s/ Dana J. Hada
Judge of the District Court

M. L. Minton, III, OBA #6255
Attorney for Petitioner
P.O.Box648
Weatherford, OK 73096
(580) 772-5546

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IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF CUSTER COUNTY ARAPAHO, OKLAHOMA

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF KENNETH WAYNE CURRELL, DECEASED

NOTICE TO CREDITORS PB-2026-12

To the Creditors of Kenneth Wayne Currell, Deceased:

All creditors having claims against Kenneth Wayne Currell, Deceased, are required to present the same with a description of

all security interests and other collateral (if any) held by each creditor with respect to such claim, to Calvin Currell, Personal Representative, at the law offices of Shandelle W. Recker, Recker & Recker PC, 109 South Broadway, Weatherford, Oklahoma 73096, attorneys for the Personal Representative, on or before the following presentation date: June 2, 2026, or the same will be forever barred.

DATED this 30 day March, 2026.

/s/Calvin Currell
Personal Representative

Shandelle Wolfe Recker, OBA #19258
Ryan D. Recker, OBA # 19695
Recker & Recker, PC
109 South Broadway
Weatherford, Oklahoma 73096
Telephone: (580) 772-2554
Fax: (580) 772-2538
Attorneys for Personal Representative

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ALIAS NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE CJ-2025-86

Notice is given that on the 5th day of May, 2026, at 10 A.M. at the Southeast Hall of the County Courthouse, Custer Co1A1ty, Oklahoma, The Sheriff ill offer for sale and sell, with appraisalment, at public auction, to the highest and best bidder, all that certain real estate in Custer County, Oklahoma,:

THE SOUTH 63.50 FEET OF LOT 19 IN BLOCK 7 OF THE WESTERN HILLS ADDITION TO THE CITY OF WEATHERFORD, CUSTER COUNTY, OKLAHOMA, ACCORDING TO THE RECORDED PLAT THEREOF.

subject to unpaid taxes, and all amounts set forth in the judgment granted herein, said property having been duly appraised at \$150,000.00. Sale will be made pursuant to an Alias Special Execution and Order of Sale issued in accordance with judgment entered in the District Court of Custer County, Oklahoma, in Case No. CJ-2025-86, titled Freedom Mortgage Corporation, vs Christopher Leonido Cabal, Spouse of Christopher Leonido Cabal, Occupants of the Premises, being all of the Defendants and persons holding or claiming any interest in lien in the subject property.

Custer County Sheriff
Custer County, Oklahoma

/s/Deana Bond
Deputy

Don Timberlake # 9021
Kim S. Jenkins # 32809
Gina D. Knight # 12996
Chynna Scruggs # 32663
BAER & TIMBERLAKE, P.C.
5901 N. Western, Suite 300
Oklahoma City, OK 73118
Telephone: (405) 842-7722
Email: mail@baertimberlake.com

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IN THE DISTRICT COURT IN AND FOR CUSTER COUNTY STATE OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF TOBI LYNN WILSON, Deceased.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS PB-2026-15

All creditors having claims against Tobi Lynn Wilson, Deceased, are required to present the same, with a description of all security interests and other collateral, if any, held by each creditor with respect to such claim, to the named Personal Representative, c/o Stephen D. Beam, Attorney at Law, 110 South Broadway, P. O. Box 3 I, Weatherford, Oklahoma 73096, on or before the following presentation date: 5th day of June, 2026, or the same will be forever barred.

DATED this 23rd clay of March, 2026.

/s/Matthew Darrel Wilson,
Personal Representative of the Estate of Tobi Lynn Wilson, Deceased

Stephen D. Beam
P.O. Box 31
Weatherford, OK 73096
(580) 772-2900
Attorney for Personal Representative

(Published in the Weatherford Daily News March 28 and April 4, 2026) LPXLP

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