

**OGLALA LAKOTA COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS OFFICE  
COURTHOUSE  
906 NORTH RIVER ST  
HOT SPRINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA 57747  
PHONE: (605) 745-5130 FAX: (605) 745-6835**

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March 12, 2026

Hon. Larry Rhoden  
Governor of South Dakota  
500 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Re: Request to Veto Senate Bill 175

Dear Governor Rhoden,

The Oglala Lakota County Board of Commissioners respectfully urges you to veto Senate Bill 175.

As a county government responsible for serving many Native voters and supporting the administration of elections in our communities, we are concerned that S.B. 175 would create unnecessary barriers to voter registration while also imposing significant administrative burdens on local election officials.

County auditors and election administrators work hard to ensure that South Dakota's elections are secure, orderly, and accessible to eligible voters. SB 175 would introduce new administrative requirements into the voter registration process, including reviewing citizenship documentation, tracking new voter classifications, and issuing different ballots depending on whether documentation is provided. These changes would require substantial updates to voter registration systems, procedures, training, and voter education.

The bill would also take effect immediately through an emergency clause. Implementing major changes to voter registration rules on such short notice would present serious logistical challenges for election officials across the state.

Election administration operates on strict timelines. The 2026 primary election will occur on June 2, and the voter registration deadline for that election is May 18. Under South Dakota law, absentee voting must begin forty-six days before the election. See SDCL § 12-19-1.2. For the 2026 primary, absentee voting will begin April 17.

These statutory deadlines leave limited time for counties to implement new procedures, update systems, train staff, and educate voters about significant changes to registration requirements. Ballot production timelines also constrain election administration, as it typically takes at least two weeks for counties to receive ballots from printers once they are ordered.

Beyond these administrative concerns, the bill would also have serious consequences for Native voters in our communities. Many residents of Oglala Lakota County live far from Department of Public Safety offices or other government facilities where identification documents can be

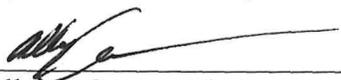
obtained or updated. Transportation barriers, long travel distances, and limited office hours can make obtaining documentation difficult even for citizens who are fully eligible to vote. For many years, South Dakota law has allowed eligible voters to register using the last four digits of their Social Security number. This method has been widely relied upon in Indian Country because it is accessible, familiar, and does not impose costs on voters, tribes, or the state. S.B. 175 would effectively eliminate that option in practice, leaving many eligible voters with no practical path to register if they cannot immediately produce the documents required by the bill.

Our county has a strong interest in ensuring that elections are administered fairly and efficiently while maintaining meaningful access to the ballot for eligible voters. Legislation that introduces new administrative complexity while also making voter registration more difficult risks creating confusion for election officials and voters alike.

For these reasons, the Oglala Lakota County Board of Commissioners respectfully asks that you veto Senate Bill 175.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Oglala Lakota County Board of Commissioners

  
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Allyssa Comer, Chairwoman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ramon Bear Runner

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Art Hopkins

\_\_\_\_\_  
Wendell Yellow Bull