

# PebbleCreek Democratic Club Studied Voting Rights

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With an impressive amount of research, the PebbleCreek Democratic Club has compiled facts about voting rights. After moving to PebbleCreek, new permanent Arizona residents must register to vote. This can be done when getting an Arizona drivers license, through the Secretary of State's office online, or using a paper application.

Arizona is one of 15 states with constitutional language prohibiting noncitizen voting, so residents are required to provide proof of citizenship to vote in local elections. Voting in federal elections is not covered by the Arizona constitution and recent efforts to require proof of citizenship to vote in federal elections have been challenged and struck down in federal court as "unlawful measures of voter suppression." Therefore, Arizona maintains two lists of registered voters—those who have provided proof of citizenship and can vote in all elections and "federal only" voters who are only eligible to vote in federal elections.

This maintenance of two lists makes Arizona a test case. Who are the voters that don't provide citizenship data and what does their participation do to the integrity of the election? The "federal" only voters in Arizona make up roughly 1.3% of the state's voter rolls and are largely composed of voters living on Native land, on college campuses, and in shelters. The Heritage Foundation maintains a database of instances of election fraud since 1982 and in a recent search of the data for fraudulent activity in Arizona, there were no instances—in 43 years—of fraud being perpetrated by "aliens"—their word for noncitizens. In that same timeframe, nationwide, 98 instances of noncitizen voting were found.

It is important to note that the U.S. Constitution does not include specific language in either the original document or the Bill of Rights about a right to vote,



*Photo by Gillian Driscoll*

and gives wide discretion to the states to manage elections. It is explicit Federal law, however, that noncitizens are prohibited from voting in federal elections. This law has the full enforcement capability of the Department of Justice, the FBI, state and local officials, federal databases, and penalties to ensure compliance.

The U.S. House recently passed the Safeguard American Voting Eligibility (SAVE) Act and forwarded it to the Senate. The proposed legislation would require proof of citizenship to vote in federal elections with the goal of stopping noncitizens from illegally casting ballots. Experience both here in Arizona and nationwide suggests that noncitizen voting is simply not a problem and that efforts to restrict voting in this way would disproportionately impact folks such as the homeless, the elderly, and others who cannot easily drive to a state office building.

More information on Voting Rights and other important issues is available on The PebbleCreek Democratic Club website at [pcdemclub.org](http://pcdemclub.org). The club meets the first Wednesday of the month (September through May) in the Tuscany Falls Ballroom. Social hour is at 6 p.m. and the meeting begins at 6:45 p.m. All are welcome to attend.