



Maricopa County Report: 222 Foreign Nationals Removed from Voter Roll Since 2015

Motor Voter at 30: DMVs are the Most Common Cause

April 2023 – Since 2015, government records show **222 foreign nationals** residing in Maricopa County, Arizona, were removed from the local voter registration roll. From this group, **9 individuals** are recorded casting **12 ballots** across **4 federal elections**.

Cancellations / Year	
2015	40
2016	35
2017	40
2018	18
2019	24
2020	25
2021	22
2022	18

Who is to blame? Who should pay the consequences? There are no simple answers. This research brief aims to make more plain the variety of factors which allow foreign nationals to often be invited into the voting system by others – yet only they suffer consequences when caught.

Core Figures

Maricopa County election officials disclosed to PILF a dataset in 2023 which offers a variety of indicators demonstrating apparent foreign voting activities. These self-explanatory numbers are perhaps the only simple facts in this area of election study.

- **Total Cancellations for Non-Citizenship:** 222
- **Cancelled Records with History of Voting:** 9
- **Average Duration of Registration:** 6 years
- **Longest Single Period of Registration:** 27 years
- **Election with Most Vote Credits by Those Cancelled:** 2020 General (5)
- **Year with Most Registrations Created:** 2012 (26)
- **Years with Most Cancellations:** 2015 and 2017 (40 each)

Common Causes of Foreign Registrants

States subject to the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (**Motor Voter**) provide the most common pathway to the voter roll. States that **automate Motor Voter**, not giving the immigrant the chance to decline registration, exacerbate the problem. States giving **driver's licenses to illegal immigrants** only increase traffic to DMVs. States with higher amounts of **legal immigration** mean more driver's licenses or state IDs

AZ Non-Citizen Voting Factors	
Motor Voter	YES
Auto Motor Voter	NO
DLs for Illegals	NO
Legal Immigration	YES
Border State	YES
3 rd Party Drives	YES

are needed for daily life. **Border states** by nature increase risks – especially if one has twin cities on both sides of the boundary (like Nogales, AZ/Nogales, Sonora). Finally, battleground states

with increased **third-party voter registration drives** can expose unassuming immigrants to registration too early.

The Lone Tool to Stop Foreign National Registration: Foreign Nationals

Contrary to popular belief or assumption, the federal government does not have an all-inclusive database election officials can query to identify non-citizens masquerading as citizens in voter rolls. This leaves election officials waiting for non-citizens to out themselves – an act that can get them charged with a federal felony.

Foreign nationals typically expose themselves for one reason: they want to remain in the United States as future naturalized citizens. During that process, they face questions about premature registration and voting activities.¹ If they have any records, they are often ordered by immigration officials to get said records cancelled. These cancel requests generate paper trails, which inform PILF research.

Votes Per Election	
2018 P	3
2018 G	3
2020 P	1
2020 G	5
2022 P	0
2022 G	0

No matter the disclosed sample size of government records or geographic location, most foreigners are registered through Motor Voter. The process can be as simple as checking the wrong box or signing the wrong form handed to you by a state employee – sometimes in a different language.

Prior PILF Research, Litigation on Non-Citizen Voting Issues

For nearly a decade, PILF has harvested government records of non-citizen voter cancellations. These studies were carried out in places like Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Michigan, Nevada, California, Texas, and sanctuary cities across the nation. Those reports are made available on the PILF website.² Sometimes research cannot occur without litigation to unlock official records. PILF has brought and won federal trial and appellate court cases in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas to secure access.³ This campaign has made it easier to study non-citizen election participation than ever before in the Motor Voter era.

Years w/ Most Registrations	
2012	26
2016	20
2020	20
2014	17
2010	16
2018	13
2011	13
2015	12
2022	12
2009	9

PILF President, J. Christian Adams

“Motor Voter leads to problems for immigrants across America. Signing the wrong form at the DMV can haunt you years later when your naturalization process switches to deportation. For 30 years, foreign nationals have been getting registered to vote. Congress must modernize Motor Voter to reflect the technologies and demographics of today.”

¹ N-400 – Application for Naturalization (Expires November 30, 2025), <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/forms/n-400.pdf>

² PILF Reports archive, <https://publicinterestlegal.org/reports/>

³ PILF litigation archive, <https://publicinterestlegal.org/cases/>