

Secretary Benson warns Michiganders: U.S. Department of Justice is unlawfully demanding your private voter information

"I told them they can't have it"

LANSING, Mich. – In a video message released today, Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson alerts Michigan residents about recent efforts by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to force the Michigan Department of State to unlawfully hand over the private, personal information of millions of Michigan voters. DOJ has sued the State of Michigan, along with seven other states, demanding full, unredacted access to the state's Qualified Voter File (QVF), which contains protected personally identifiable information, including voters' Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers, and other sensitive personal data.

"Why do they want access to your personal information?" said Benson. "I've asked them that. Other secretaries of state – both Democrats and Republicans – have asked them that. They won't tell us. Nobody – not the president, the DOJ or any other federal agency has the right to your sensitive, private voter information."

Federal and state laws include strict privacy protections to keep voter data confidential and to keep Michiganders safe from identity theft. [The Privacy Act of 1974](#) was passed specifically to prevent the creation of centralized databases by the federal government and requires government agencies to publish information about how any data systems are going to be used. The [Michigan Election Law](#) explicitly prohibits MDOS from sharing certain personally identifiable information contained in the voter file.

Including Michigan, 30 states have refused DOJ's demands to turn over voter files. Only two states, Indiana and Wyoming, have acted outside of existing privacy laws and provided their full unredacted statewide voter registration lists to the U.S. Justice Department.

"Here in Michigan, you have my word that I will stand up to this illegal and unconstitutional power grab for your private information," Benson said.

WATCH: [Secretary Benson warns Michiganders: U.S. Department of Justice is unlawfully demanding your private voter information](#)

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