



To: House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee

From: Camille Wimbish, Ohio Voter Rights Coalition

Re: Interested Party Testimony H.B. 41

Date: April 25, 2017

My name is Camille Wimbish and I am testifying on behalf of The Ohio Voter Rights Coalition, a network of non-partisan voter advocates. Our democracy works best when all eligible citizens are able to participate. We are providing interested party testimony today because we have procedural and substantive concerns.

Procedurally, it is unclear whether this committee is prepared to vote on H.B. 41 as introduced, or on the amended version Sub. H.B. 41. As you are aware, the bill sponsor testified regarding her intent to incorporate an important amendment to allow early voters to continue to receive a regular ballot if they provide the last four digits of their social security number. However, today's hearing has been noticed for a possible vote on H.B. 41, without the amendment. Neither the hearing notice nor the General Assembly's website indicates the status of amended Sub. H.B. 41. If this is a procedural misstep, we respectfully request that the committee notice another hearing and possible vote on Sub. H.B. 41, so that the public has the notice and opportunity to provide input on the appropriate bill.

If H.B. 41 goes forward as introduced, we have strong substantive concerns with the bill. The as introduced version unnecessarily eliminates the option to provide the last four digits of a voter's social security number during early voting. Such an attempt would create a substantial barrier to the right to vote, which we vigorously oppose.

Ohio's current process for early in person voting allows voters the ability to cast a regular ballot by providing one of three forms of identification: (1) an Ohio driver's license number, (2) the last 4 digits of the voter's social security number, or (3) any of the forms of Election Day ID (e.g. driver's license, utility bill, or government document). This approach represents a healthy balance of ballot security and voting accessibility. Certain classes of voters are more likely to lack a valid Ohio Driver's license or ID card, particularly seniors, minorities, low-income residents, and college students. For these populations, the option of providing the last four digits of their social security number is absolutely critical to ensuring their fundamental right to vote.

If this committee is determined to go forward with HB 41 as introduced, we raise strenuous objections to making such a substantive change to Ohio's election laws without due deliberation, transparency, and a demonstration the change is necessary. To date, none of these criteria have been satisfied.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Camille Wimbish
Director
Ohio Voter Rights Coalition