



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF OHIO**

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LWVO Interested Party Testimony on  
HB 41 – Early Voting Process  
House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee  
Peg Rosenfield, LWVO Elections Specialist  
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April 26, 2017

Chairman Blessing, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO).

The League of Women Voters believes voting should be free, fair, and accessible to all eligible voters. Early voting has been hugely popular and successful, with up to a third of Ohio voters opting to cast their ballot before Election Day. Voters count on the flexibility it provides to vote on a date and time that fit increasingly busy schedules full of responsibilities such as work, school, childcare, eldercare, and other duties.

In general, we believe early voting is important to protect and preserve, we support making early voting easier, and we oppose attempts to make early voting difficult. Based on that, we agree with the objectives of HB 41 as far as it would make early in-person more like election day by not requiring a voter to fill out the unnecessary paperwork of an absentee application form. However, we strongly believe there needs to be a process for voters using their SSN4 as an accepted form of voter ID to cast a regular – not provisional – ballot. For voters without other forms of ID, being able to use the SSN4 to cast a regular ballot is one of the primary reasons they favor early voting. We also want to ensure that the proposed new early vote process includes using other acceptable ID documents, such as a utility bill, to cast a regular ballot.

While we understand that a sub-bill containing an amendment to that effect was previously accepted by this committee, the fact that it is not yet available<sup>1</sup> publicly online is troubling. We strongly urge this committee not to race to pass a bill until the public has had a chance to review and weigh in on the substitute version, in order to ensure that the amended version does in fact protect the right of all voters to cast a regular ballot and that there are not any unforeseen consequences that can happen when legislating in a hurry.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on HB 41.

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<sup>1</sup> As of this writing on April 24, 2017, the legislature's website at - <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA132-HB-41> - still has the "As Introduced" version of HB 41 listed and does not provide a substitute version of the bill for public review.

*The League of Women Voters of Ohio, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.*