

Good afternoon Chairman Blessing, Vice Chairman Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde and members of the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to be able to testify in front of you all this morning in regards to House Bill 41.

“The most basic right of all was the right to choose your own leaders”. A statement made by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965. And today, in 2017, fifty-two years from when he gave that speech, we are still trying to make it more difficult for citizens to vote as opposed to making it easier.

Policy Matters Ohio states that one in ten Ohioans do not have photo identification. The populations hit hardest with lack of proper identification are: elderly voters at about 290,000 or 18%, young adults including college students and those without cars, only one in four, or 260,000 black voters and that’s not even touching other minority groups. Also, at least 380,000 moderate-income Ohioans, 15% of those in this income range with not be able to vote early in person without an identification card. What do all of these populations have in common? That’s right, party lines. Are we trying to eliminate the democratic vote as much as possible?

The cost to the state of Ohio would be around \$7million dollars to provide those who would be eligible to vote but lack identification annually, if they decided to pick up the tab. However, there would still be cost incurred for the purchase of birth certificates. Also, I believe the state could find a multitude of better ways to use \$7 million annually.

I am a firm believer that we should be making it as easy as possible for all citizens to vote. Requiring voters to have an identification card to cast a vote early, in person is forcing them to “pay to play”, for lack of better terms. I ask you, how is this any different from the poll tax?

And it sets up an unfair dual system if an absentee voter votes from home and mails in their ballots they do not need to provide an identification card but if a person comes to an early vote center they must provide an identification card. Even on election day a voter can bring in other forms of voter ID but if they vote at an early vote center they cannot.

If someone files a challenge after the 30th day before an election, it was at the discretion of the board to postpone the hearing until ten days after the elections but that challenged voter could vote a provisional ballot now they cannot.

As I conclude, I will leave you with the words from our country’s 82nd Attorney General, Eric Holder, "Let me be clear: we will not allow political pretexts to disenfranchise American citizens of their most precious right."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning. I appreciate your time and attention.