



Representative Kathleen Clyde
75th House District

Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 364
Designating Ohio Voter Registration Day

Chairwoman Anielski and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for hearing sponsor testimony on House Bill 364, my proposal to designate the fourth Tuesday of September as Ohio Voter Registration Day.

Half of voting age American citizens live in a state with Automatic Voter Registration or Same Day Voter Registration. There, registering is easy. Here in Ohio, a state without Automatic or Same Day Registration, we see at least 1 million eligible citizens not registered to vote. Until we can implement Automatic Voter Registration, which I have introduced twice in the House, we have to do whatever we can to make sure our constituents know how they can register, vote, and have their ballot counted.

Voter registration as it currently works is an obstacle to voting in Ohio. Even though we have online voter registration, we are still funneling those who could benefit from it into a paper system. When a young or elderly person doesn't have a driver's license, for example, they cannot use the Online Voter Registration system. If they have a driver's license with an old address on it, they cannot use the Online Voter Registration system. Students also have extra difficulty. If a student lives at a dorm address, they might receive their mail at a different dorm from the one they live in. There is often confusion for college students about where to register and vote. Another problem is that many people believe their voting address is automatically updated when they change their address with the Post Office, but it is not. Ohio also has one of the strictest cutoff dates for registering to vote at 30 days before the election. Many people don't start thinking about the election until that day has come and gone.

Let me reiterate how big the problem is and Ohio's not the only one. In 2012, an MIT study revealed that about 1.2 million votes were lost across the country due to registration problems. And news reports from 2016 revealed similar issues. Ohio Voter Registration Day will help teach people how to navigate our overly complex voter registration system.

House Bill 364 would allow Ohio to officially join with other states in observing National Voter Registration Day. During National Voter Registration Day, citizens and organizations come

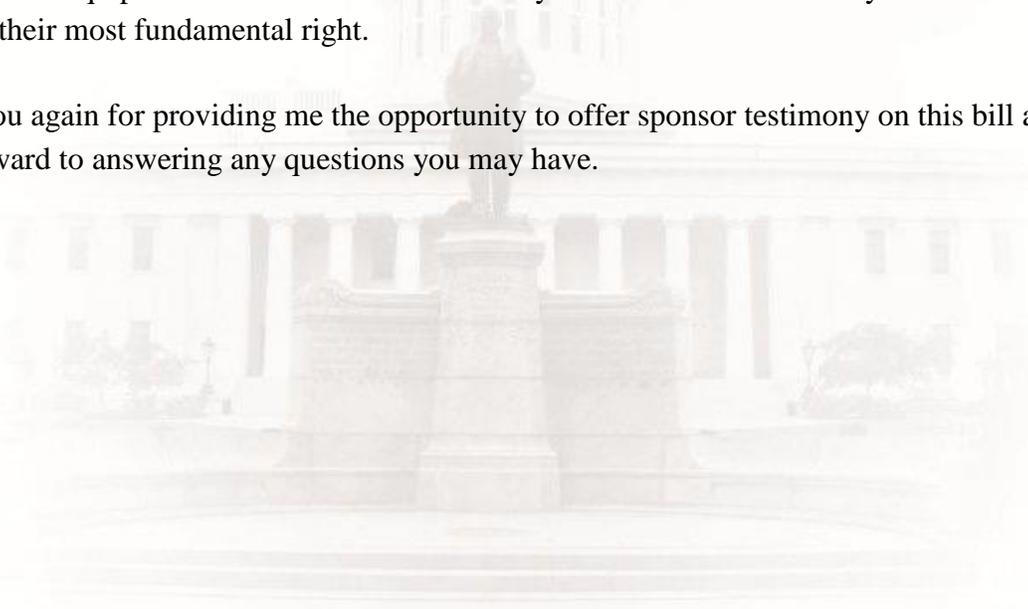


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together to host voter registration drives, advocacy events and information campaigns. These events work to publicize the critical information people need to get registered, update their addresses and cast their ballots—especially among those who may have the most questions when it comes to registration, namely young voters, college students, minority voters and low income voters.

During each of the last two elections, I have challenged student groups across Ohio to reach out to register classmates in the spirit of National Voter Registration Day. In adopting an Ohio Voter Registration Day, we are not simply declaring another awareness day, we are initiating a call to action. We are calling Ohioans, voters, advocates—everyone with a stake in our democracy—to reach out and equip fellow voters across the Buckeye State with the tools they need to exercise their most fundamental right.

Thank you again for providing me the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on this bill and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.



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