

35th House District

Summit County

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Tavia Galonski State Representative

Chairman Wiggman, Vice Chairman Ginter, Ranking Member Kelly, and my colleagues of the House State and Local Government Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to offer sponsor testimony on House Bill 204.

House Bill 204 requires that all new forms of voting machines, marking devices, or automatic tabulating equipment used in elections be switched to paper ballots. The term, “paper ballot” refers to a paper document on which a voter records the voter’s choices and that serves as the official record of the voter’s choices for counting purposes.

After the 2016 Presidential election, the integrity of the Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) voting systems that the State of Ohio uses for its elections has come under scrutiny. After learning that these systems were hacked by foreign agents, House Bill 204 aims to protect the integrity of Ohio elections from such foreign entities.

There are many benefits to switching to paper ballots, and Ohio should consider switching to them. In a time where there are fears of voting machine hacking, election experts are advocating for off-line voting. The Center for American Progress recently released a study that highlights that 42 states use electronic voting machines that are equipped with software more than a decade old that leaves them vulnerable to hacking and malware.ⁱ According to the Center for American Progress, Ohio ranks as following in the following categories: Incomplete in minimum cybersecurity for voter registration systems, fair in voter-verified paper audit trail, fair in post-election audits, unsatisfactory in ballot accounting and reconciliation, fair in paper absentee ballots, fair in voting machine certification requirements, and fair in pre-election logic and accuracy testing.ⁱⁱ

A growing number of voting-rights advocates and cybersecurity experts, such as Verified Voting and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, respectively, are advocating that the way to protect our voting system is by using paper ballots. For one, paper ballots are immune to computer hacking, there is no need for backup ballots to perform audits, and they are much cheaper than computer ballots.ⁱⁱⁱ

This bill is not just for constituents in Northeast Ohio, but for every voter and soon to be voter in the State of Ohio. We must do everything we can to ensure and protect the integrity of our elections and our democracy.

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Chairman Wiggman, Vice Chairman Ginter, Ranking Member Kelly, and the rest of the House State and Local Government Committee, again I thank you for allowing me to offer sponsor testimony for House Bill 204. Thank you for your time and I am willing to answer any questions you may have.

ⁱ https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2018/02/11130702/020118_ElectionSecurity-report1.pdf#page=31

ⁱⁱ https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2018/02/11130702/020118_ElectionSecurity-report1.pdf#page=31

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www8.nationalacademies.org/onpinews/newsitem.aspx?RecordID=25120>