



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF OHIO**

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LWVO Opposition Testimony on SB 22  
Ohio House State and Local Government Committee  
Jen Miller, Executive Director  
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Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Ginter, Ranking Member Kelly, and esteemed Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to offer opposition testimony on SB 22 on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Ohio.

Many of our League members work the polls on Election Day, and quite a few are polling location managers in different parts of the state. We care deeply about election operations, and we know first hand that there are indeed times during low turnout elections that polling locations can be overstaffed and could effectively manage the polls with fewer people.

But we also caution that there are potential downsides to having too few people:

- The total number of poll workers, per state law, needs to include equal numbers from both major political parties, which means reductions can only be made in even-numbered increments.
- There needs to be sufficient poll workers in order to cover restroom or meal breaks and still have partisan balance.
- Most importantly, there are some circumstances in which poll worker reductions would be detrimental to voters, such as during a higher turnout election, power outages, or technical problems. The same is true for a location that is likely to require additional support even in lower turnout years, such as a nursing home where voters are more likely to need assistance in voting and/or a location where there may be high voter confusion, like on a college campus where there could many first-time voters.

There is a current Secretary of State (SOS) directive that requires BOEs to deliberately consider Election Day logistics, called Election Administration Plans (EAPs). The SOS directive is a critical part of this discussion and of particular interest to the League, as it came about as a result of our litigation in the aftermath of the 2004 election.

Many Ohio counties experienced incredibly long lines, and LWW Ohio sued then-Secretary Blackwell. Through the lawsuit, we learned that many BOEs decided how many poll workers and voting machines to assign to a precinct based on historic turnout, rather than trying to determine expected turnout based on the number of registered voters. Too many BOEs were not prepared for such robust turnout, resulting in lines that were hours long and delays in polling location closures well into the night.

Ultimately, after the US Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in our favor, we reached a settlement agreement with the State of Ohio. One of the terms of that settlement required BOEs to prepare written EAPs to systematically plan out all phases of the election to ensure there were adequate resources (poll workers, voting machines, ballots, etc.) for each location, as well as other protections such as requiring a post-election audits to verify results and having contingency plans in case something did go wrong. Over the years, election plans and operations have improved considerably, but unfortunately, the settlement has now expired, and EAPS are now issued only through an SOS directive and not in state law.

The EAP process can provide assurances that BOEs would take a thoughtful approach to deciding if and when to reduce poll workers including having contingency plans in the event of equipment malfunctions, power outages, or unexpectedly high turnout.

If this Committee wishes to grant BOEs the discretion to reduce the number of poll workers, then that discretion ought to include “guardrails” to ensure such discretion is used responsibly and that there is an adequate public process for such decisions.

While we all hope for the best judgment exercised by our officials, in order to protect the integrity and fairness of our elections, our laws need to include adequate protections. If this committee does not include a codification of the EAPs in this law, we firmly oppose this legislation outright and ask you to do the same.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony, and please feel free to contact us with any questions.

*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.*