



WRITTEN PROPONENT TESTIMONY FOR HOUSE BILL 49

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairman Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to provide written proponent testimony on behalf of House Bill 49.

As I've traveled our great state in my first year as Ohio's Chief Elections Officer, one theme that constantly reverberates with regard to elections is clarity. Whether I'm talking with voters, elections officials at one of the 76 county boards of elections I visited to date, or my staff who deal with these issues every day, the issue of clarity when it comes to election law is constant. We are fortunate in Ohio that voters have ample access to make their voices heard. Registered voters have 28 days of early voting, no fault absentee vote by mail, and weekend voting ahead of the polls being open for 13 hours, from 6:30 AM until 7:30 PM, on Election Day.

We also recognize that the sanctity of free and fair elections means we must ensure that only registered voters vote – and vote once. There are many acceptable forms of identification which a person may use to vote. Drivers licenses, state ID cards, and utility bills are the best-known forms. The law also permits a registered voter who chooses early in-person absentee voting or no-fault absentee vote-by-mail to use the last four digits of their social security number as their form of identification.

Ohio Revised Code Sections 3503.14, 3503.16, 3509.03, 3505.18, 3505.181, also permits a copy of "other government document" to be used as proof of identification. In my opinion and the opinion of many others, certain county issued ID's should fall under the "other government document," portion of the law, but it appears this isn't always the case.

House Bill 49 will clarify the acceptable forms of photo identification by explicitly stating that certain county IDs must be considered an acceptable form of identification, providing clarity to voters and elections officials.

Thank you, please do not hesitate to reach out if there are any questions.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank LaRose".

Frank LaRose