

TO: Ohio House of Representatives State and Local Government Committee
FROM: Pastor Frederick V. LaMarr, Baptist Pastors Conference of Columbus and Vicinity
DATE: June 3, 2020
RE: Opposition to HB 680

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and Members of the House State & Local Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present opponent testimony in opposition to House Bill 680 ("HB680"). My name is Pastor Frederick V. Lamarr, and I am here to testify as President of the Baptist Pastors Conference of Columbus and Vicinity, Inc.

As a pastor, I am called to share Jesus' message to care for and protect the least of us. For this upcoming election, we have a responsibility to protect vulnerable voters such as senior citizens and those with immuno-compromised systems. This means we should strengthen and support Ohio's vote-by-mail system, while at the same time ensuring access to in-person voting.

I am here today because I am particularly concerned about a provision in HB 680, that would end Souls to the Polls. For the last 5 years our Organization that makes up 70 Pastors across Columbus and Vicinity have come together in a simultaneous effort to inspire our church and community members to participate in the voting process.

We have the opportunity today to make some changes to our voting laws that have broad bipartisan consensus. Instead of eliminating the last weekend of early voting, I urge you to consider election reforms that have bipartisan agreement among the Ohio Secretary of State and the Ohio Association of Election officials, such as

- Mailing postage paid applications and ballots to all registered voters, and
- Passing an online absentee ballot request system

We are **TRULY** stronger and better when we stand together. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I stand ready to answer any questions you may have.