

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the State and Local Government Committee,

Please accept my written testimony opposing House Bill 680. I am a 23-year resident of Orange, Ohio, mother of two, and member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cleveland. In our representative democracy, our shared goal, surely, is to ensure universal access to the ballot. House Bill 680 will have the opposite effect. By permanently shortening the window of time to vote early, and making the process for obtaining an absentee ballot more cumbersome, expensive, and inconvenient, this bill is the enemy of safe and secure elections.

As you well know, voting by mail has been practiced successfully in several states as well as US Armed Forces overseas. It is not some experimental procedure. It has worked well and has not resulted in significant fraud or abuse. When I think of the elderly members of my faith community, the frailty of their health, and the lurking threat of Covid-19, my wish for every one of them is that they will be able to vote by mail in November. In order to accomplish that, the state legislature must allocate funds to support increased vote-by-mail with additional staff in BOEs throughout the state; allow the Secretary of State to cover the cost of postage for applications and ballots; allow citizens to make requests for absentee ballots online; allow for multiple early voting centers and drop-off boxes in each county; and increase poll worker recruitment.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this bill. To do otherwise is to acknowledge that the state legislature is not in favor of safe and secure elections with equal accessibility for all. That would be an offense to democratic values and a disservice to the citizens of Ohio.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Eileen McCully