

Hello - my name is Rick Neal of Columbus, and I'd like to submit the following brief testimony in opposition to HB 680 for the hearing today.

I live in Columbus and have had the privilege of being on the ballot twice these past few years - once running for Congress and once running for a seat on my county party central committee. Both were very different campaigns, but both were part of a time-honored American tradition of standing up on Election Day and listening to the voices of my community as people made their decision about the kind of representation they wanted.

The first election, in November 2018, was relatively smooth and straightforward. The second, this past spring, for which I was also a poll worker, was chaotic and messy. I lend my voice today in opposition to HB 680 because it would not fix those problems but make them worse.

Ohio faces daunting challenges this fall in organizing a smooth, straightforward election. COVID-19 will still be with us and requires substantial accommodations to make sure people can vote and stay healthy. Unfortunately, the legitimacy of our elections this fall is also being attacked and cast into doubt from the highest level of government - and so Ohio has a duty to make sure our election proceeds smoothly and easily, to prevent the taint of illegitimacy and doubt that would undermine the results - no matter which candidates win - and weaken even further the bonds between government and the people.

We face extraordinary challenges right now. As citizens, we demand legitimate, responsive government that enacts the will of the people to respond to these challenges, to expand - not limit - our freedom, and help us build a better future for all of us. I ask you to oppose HB 680. Thank you.