

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

DATE: June 2, 2020

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ARE YOU REPRESENTING: YOURSELF ORGANIZATION

DO YOU WISH TO TESTIFY ON

LEGISLATION (BILL NUMBER): HB 680

SPECIFIC ISSUE: Voting – online applications and Postage

SUBJECT MATTER: Early Voting

DO YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE THE ENACTMENT OF LEGISLATION REGARDING THIS ISSUE?

HOW MUCH TIME WILL YOUR TESTIMONY REQUIRE? written

PLEASE GIVE A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE GROUNDS ON WHICH YOU FAVOR OR OPPOSE SUCH ENACTMENT:

I strongly oppose HB 680, and urge you to support Safe and Accessible elections.

I first was involved in voting access back in 1974 when, as a senior at Berea High School, Ohio Secretary of State Ted Brown charged me with registering newly minted eighteen-year-olds to vote. I learned then that voting was a duty of citizenship. I probably wasn't very good at it, but I tried to help my fellow classmates begin to take on that responsibility.

There have been some good changes to voting in Ohio since then (no fault absentee voting and early voting in particular), combined with huge changes in how society functions in general, and technology specifically.

When the March primary moved to all vote by mail I made contact with registered voters who had not yet voted. Not surprisingly, most were confused by the sudden change, and the many dates thrown out. It was an unprecedented time, and I was happy to help fellow Ohioans follow the process. I had to convince regular voters that what they received in the mail in response to the online form they filled out was NOT actually their ballot, but rather an application that they had to fill out. Voters had to fill out the application, then mail in time for the BOE to process that and mail back the ballot in time for the voter

to complete the ballot and mail it by the deadline. Read that again. Got it? Paper moves through the mail three or four times for each voter in order for vote-by-mail to happen. Each time something enters the mail it takes at minimum two days to be delivered, and introduces risk of long delay or loss. **The State needs to allow for online vote-by-mail applications.** This cuts in half the amount of time and number of times paper is moving through the mail system. I love the USPS, but it's not time efficient in 2020.

In addition, this in a world where a large portion of voters my age and younger do all their banking, pay their bills, file their taxes, and make stock trades online. The world has changed since 1974 when people relied on mail for everything. But the biggest surprise to me, an unexpected barrier for many of these voters? People no longer have stamps! They do everything electronically and haven't used stamps in years. Even if they printed their absentee application, they didn't have a stamp to mail it and had to wait to find one from a friend or make it to the post office to buy one! I'm 62, I have stamps, apparently if one is 40 it's pretty unlikely, if they're in their twenties and don't live with older parents – forget it. For these people it's not the cost of the stamp, but the barrier to getting their hands on one. This is how society works today and because of this - **It is critical for the State of Ohio to provide postage in order for eligible voters to exercise their civic duty.**

Thank you,

Carol Gay