

Opponent Written Testimony, HB680

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

I am Norman Robbins, an Ohio resident, an MD, and an Emeritus Professor at CWRU School of Medicine.

As a matter of protecting people's lives and well being, I'm asking you to vote against HB680, which makes vote-by-mail more difficult even though vote-by-mail is the safest form of voting during this pandemic.

Ohio has enormous numbers of voting age adults in overlapping groups who are susceptible to the worst outcomes of COVID-19: nearly 2 million residents who are over 65, nearly 1.0 million African Americans, and 1.7 million with two or more chronic diseases. If HB680 makes voting-by-mail more difficult for these Ohioans, they may end up not voting at all for fear of COVID-19 or will vote in-person, exposing themselves to greater risk of infection.

It is already challenging enough to provide reasonably safe in-person voting for those who need or prefer it. However, when even more in-person susceptible voters, who could have voted by mail, increase the total contacts with poll workers and the numbers of people waiting indoors, there surely will be increased chances of infection. If you truly care about protecting public health, why wouldn't you do the opposite of HB680 by encouraging voting by mail per Secretary LaRose's suggestions?