

Sunrise Columbus

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Letter **opposing** HB-680

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

As we move through a time of difficult and mounting crises, securing our democracy is more important than perhaps it has ever been.

We saw this spring that half-measures made Ohio's primary messy, chaotic, and confusing. We ended with historically low turn-out in a year with a hotly contested presidential primary. (<https://liveresults.ohiosos.gov/>)

We need to take urgent, concrete steps that secure free, fair, and safe elections.

Unfortunately, HB 680 would be a move in the wrong direction.

This bill would make voting harder and more complicated. Rather than sending all Ohio voters their absentee ballot or even an application, HB 680 will:

- Prevent the Secretary of State from mailing absentee ballot applications to all voters
- Slow and confuse the process by instead sending an informational postcard
- At the same time actually reduce the amount of time for early vote and vote-by-mail
- And even further, it will restrict the Secretary of State's use of federal election funding to specifically bar paying for return postage for ballot applications and ballots

These changes would pervert the core function of government elections by making it more difficult for citizens to vote with these unnecessary restrictions.

In addition, the bill threatens the safety and security of election day by requiring any emergency plans to be established 60 days in advance, which by definition may be impossible in a sudden emergency.

We believe in American democracy. We need to secure the vote of all citizens.

We urge you to reject HB 680 and instead immediately advance these real solutions:

- Pass Senate Bill 191 that allows voters to apply online for an absentee ballot.
- Give all ballot application envelopes and ballot return envelopes pre-paid postage.
- Allow more than one early vote center and drop-box per county - something especially important to reduce crowds during a disease crisis.
- And further reduce lines and crowding by promoting vote-by-mail and early voting.



Sincerely,

**Sunrise
Columbus**