



**LWVO Proponent Testimony on SB 194 - Voter Registration Systems
Before the Ohio House State and Local Government Committee
By Jen Miller, Executive Director
December 7, 2020**

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and esteemed Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of SB 194 on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Ohio.

Voter registration has been a priority of the League of Women Voters of Ohio since 1920, both in terms of directly registering voters as well as improving registration policies. Our voter registration drives used to entail League members picking up citizens in their cars to drive them to the county Board of Elections during business hours. In 1977, we secured a legislative victory for mail-in registration. We also were incredibly supportive of Ohio's more recent adoption of online voter registration.

During this past election season, hundreds of volunteers throughout the state worked to register eligible Ohioans to vote despite the unprecedented obstacles presented by the ongoing pandemic. Given that commitment to voters, I come to you with an urgent request to upgrade Ohio's registration system.

The magnitude of this need became ever more clear during the supplemental process in 2019, where infrequent voters are removed from the voter rolls. The League applauds the Secretary of State for making the purge list aka the registration reset list public, because that transparency helped protect eligible Ohio citizens from being wrongfully removed. However, it also provided insights into policy changes that we must make before this General Assembly ends.

Of the 235,000 voter files on that list to be removed, more than 4,000 had voted in 2016 or 2018 (that number grows across the entire statutory period). Another 11,000 had received conflicting information about their voter registration status. Countless Ohioans

who changed addresses within the same county were at risk of removal from the voter rolls as well, which would have violated state and federal law.

Secretary LaRose and LWVO grappled over these data management errors, and we applaud his efforts to prevent the wrongful removal of tens of thousands of Ohioans who have voted recently, received conflicting information, or have not moved out of county.

However, we remain concerned that Ohio's voter registration system is outdated, insecure, and dangerously prone to errors. At the very minimum, Ohio should be reviewing and approving voter registration vendors for security and quality, just as it does for voting machines.

This bill would rename the Board of Voting Machine Examiners to be the Board of Voting Equipment Examiners, and require each county Board of Election to select vendors for registration systems from an approved list. We also agree that a cybersecurity expert should serve on the Board of Voting Equipment Examiners, because that expertise is needed for vetting voting machines and registration systems alike.

Voting is the engine of our great democracy, and we must do everything we can to protect this sacred right, starting with ensuring that Ohio's voter registration is secure, accurate, and fair.

Please contact me with additional questions at director@lwvohio.org or 614-469-1505.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.