

HB 21700



GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT AND REFORM COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 9/15/2020

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Organization Representing: self

Testifying on Bill Number: ~~HB 21700~~ HB 21700

Testimony: Verbal Written Both

Testifying As: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist? Yes No

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Testimony Opposing House Bill 680
Government Oversight and Reform Committee
Submitted by:
Andrea R. Yagoda

Chair Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to HB 680.

How ironic that this Bill had been previously scheduled in this committee just days after the passing of John Lewis a staunch defender of voting rights in this country. I must say I am a bit disappointed that our legislative body has not seen fit to expand access to voting in general but especially during a pandemic.

I am asking that this Committee amend the current Bill to include/delete the following:

Remove all language banning prepaid return postage on absentee ballots requests AND ballots. I have been working to educate the public on absentee voting. Many of the people I speak to are elderly. They are confined in their homes with no access to the post office and I understand that I cannot provide them with stamps as it would be deemed something of value. Why would we disenfranchise the elderly, the infirm, the disabled and make it more difficult for them to vote? I also work with residents at the Franklin County Community Based Correctional facility, most of the residents are eligible to vote. Because there is not prepaid postage they are all requesting that the BOE deliver the ballots personally to them and pick them up as dictated by statute. Two workers from the BOE must take the time to visit the facility. This would not be necessary if pre paid postage was available.

Add language clarifying that absentee ballots may be requested online. Working to educate people on the absentee ballot process I have been told by many that although they have a computer they do not have a working printer. Many are afraid to merely call the Board of Elections for fear they will not receive their ballots. An online application process kills two birds with one stone, postage and printing. Further, I attended the hearing at the House and Frank LaRose testified that he favored the online application, had the resources for it and could have it up and running in 90 days. This man was elected by the people of Ohio to serve as their Secretary of State so let him do his job.

Add language clarifying that each county can have multiple secure drop boxes for ballot return. This is to me a no brainer. Many voters live far from their Board of Elections and we should be making voting more not less accessible. With possible funding cuts to the United States Postal Service and delays in the mailing process this is a way to ensure that ballots are timely received.

Add language allowing ballots mailed on Election Day to be counted. With all the hurdles, this is an easy way again to ensure that ballots are timely received.

Add language requiring the state to mail every Ohio voter an absentee ballot request form (including a prepaid return envelope!) before all future elections.

Add language stating that if in-person voting is ever restricted again (as occurred during the Primary), every registered voter would be sent an absentee ballot in the mail (skipping the current request process).

I would request that this Committee reject HB 680 as written.

Thank You,
Andrea R. Yagoda
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