

Andrew Green

Testimony in Opposition to HB 294

Ohio House of Representative Government Oversight Committee

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chairman Swearingen, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for affording me the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to HB 294.

While the original form of this bill contained a number of good provisions that would have expand access to the ballot box—namely the implementation of an automated voter registration system of sorts, the addition of activities to avoid having a voter’s registration canceled, and clarifying the permissibility of electronic forms of ID such as utility bills and bank statements—the substitute bill eliminates them. All of these changes that were removed would have made my job as a Voting Location Manager on Election Day easier. I have had numerous instances in which I am unsure whether electronic forms of ID are acceptable or not because of the vagueness of the law (and frankly, the outdated nature of the law due to the advent of online banking and bill pay). Instead of improving our elections in these ways, this substitute bill eliminates provisions in current law that enhances the accessibility of the ballot for many Ohioans. The elimination of curbside voting will make it more difficult for voters with mobility issues to cast a ballot. The requirement that absentee ballot requests be on a specific form makes it more difficult for absentee voters without working printers (like myself in more elections than not), especially when this bill also prohibits the secretary of state or any other government entity from sending these very forms to voters without voters specifically asking for one. The only real benefit to voters that this substitute bill retains from the original bill is the requirement that the Secretary of State create an online absentee ballot request system.

I could continue, at great length, about how various provisions in this substitute bill will make it more difficult for many eligible Ohio voters to cast a ballot, but I simply do not have the time to do that in order to get this testimony to the chairman within 24 hours of the committee hearing. Certainly, making it slightly more difficult for a few people do vote is not necessarily the worst thing in the world, but that is only in the case in which it accomplishes some needed good that reaches far beyond the few people it may unfortunately negatively impact. However, this bill does not do that. From my expertise as a Voting Location Manager and experience as an Ohio Voter, there are no discernable benefits many of these provisions will provide to the security, integrity, or efficiency of our state’s elections, so what is the need to make the ballot box even slightly less accessible to even one eligible Ohio voter?

Thank you, again Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chairman Swearingen, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee for providing the opportunity to submit written testimony today. I welcome any questions you may have via email or telephone at the email address and/or phone number provided to the chairman’s office.