

**Scott W. DiMauro**  
President

**Jeffrey Wensing**  
Vice President

**Mark A. Hill**  
Secretary-Treasurer

**Patricia Collins Murdock**  
Executive Director

**House Bill 294: Opposition Testimony (written only)**

**House Government Oversight Committee**

**Wednesday, December 7, 2022**

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Brown, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Scott DiMauro. I am a proud high school government teacher and currently serve as the President of the Ohio Education Association. On behalf of the 120,000 members of OEA, I stand in opposition to House Bill 294. The substitute version of this bill, if enacted, will make it more difficult for Ohioans to vote.

The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy. As educators, we try to instill in our students the rights they have in our country and the importance of civic participation regardless of what they believe. As an organization, OEA members have adopted legislative policies that support the right of all Ohio citizens to have access to the polls. The legislature should be pursuing ways to make it easier and more convenient for Ohioans to vote. House Bill 294 serves to erect more barriers and make it harder to vote.

OEA opposes the provision in House Bill 294 that would eliminate alternative means of identification for voters such as a utility bill or bank statement. A strict photo ID requirement places an unnecessary burden on Ohioans who do not have a driver's license. This can include college students, the poor, elderly, or disabled. Even with the state potentially providing free state ID cards as proposed in separate legislation, this is an unnecessary hurdle and state expense.

OEA also opposes the provision in the bill that would eliminate August special elections in most cases. This would further limit the opportunities for school districts to seek school levies and secure funding based on community needs.

This committee has heard from voting rights advocates and individual voters that this bill will move Ohio in the wrong direction. As a state, we should be looking for more civic participation, higher voter turnout, and ways to make it easier for citizens to participate in our democracy. I urge a no vote on HB 294.

The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

225 E. Broad St., Box 2550,  
Columbus, OH 43216  
PHONE: (614) 228-4526  
or 1-800-282-1500  
FAX: (614) 228-8771