

Opponent Testimony of Mike Halaiko
Regarding HB 294
Presented to the Ohio House Government Oversight Committee
December 7, 2022

Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Brown and Members of the Ohio House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee today on HB 294. My name is Mike Halaiko, and I live in Pickerington. I am opposed to HB 294—this proposal is an attack on the right of all Ohioans.

DO NOT PASS HB-294-AN ANTI-VOTER BILL THAT IS RESTRICTIVE TO VOTER ACCESS TO FREELY CAST THEIR VOTES.

HB-294 is a regressive bill looking for a problem. Nothing within this proposed measure would do anything to prevent voter fraud but it absolutely inconveniences Ohio voters and creates confusion, creates longer lines to vote, reduces voter participation and further increases voter apathy.

HB-294 will do the following:

- Limits duration of drop box availability
- Cuts the number of early voting days
- Cuts off vote-by-mail ballot requests a week earlier,
- Creates a new three-tier ID rule

HB-294 -VOTER SUPPRESSION BILL IN DETAIL

1. Limits counties to one ballot drop box location the last 10 days before an election—regardless of how large or populated a county is. Voters in Ohio’s highest population counties sat in traffic jams at drop boxes last year, but counties will be prohibited from making drop boxes more accessible.
2. Eliminates one of the busiest final three days of early voting - Monday. In 2020, some 31,413 Ohio voters voted the day before Election Day.
3. Cuts off mail ballot requests at 10 days before the election, which would make Ohio more restrictive than 40+ other states. In 2020, some 451,863 Ohio voters requested a ballot the final week. In that time, 413,093 voters requested and returned their ballots.

4. Voters would be subject to a new three-tier ID rule with photo ID as the preference. 58.6% of voters, more than 3.5 million, voted by mail in 2020.

5. If a vote-by-mail ballot is not sealed in the voter ID envelope -- but inside the return envelope —it will be thrown out.

6. Makes ban on public offices paying return postage even stricter than current law. Paying voters' return postage would remove a barrier to voting by mail.

House Bill 294 is a divisive and dangerous anti-voter bill that contains many of the same attacks on our fundamental freedom to vote that we have seen passed in Georgia and other states. We all want safe and accessible elections, but Ohio Legislators are pushing new anti-voter legislation that will take us in the wrong direction. Any bill that rolls back our access to the ballot box or our right to vote is unacceptable. Ohio already has enough anti-voter laws. We don't need any more.

Elections in Ohio are Safe and Fair. In an article written Jan. 23rd, 2021, by Emily Morgan of The Daily Record, the current Secretary of State, Frank LaRose, stated "for election fraud to occur on a wide a scale, dozens of Republicans and dozens of Democrats who all work for the elections board would have to collaborate on committing a felony and keep it completely quiet." He also went on to say that "I think we ran the most successful election we've ever had."

For all of the above-mentioned reasons, I urge you to vote "No1" on HB 294!

Thank You.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mike Halaiko
Retired Educator