

**Opponent Testimony of Michael Parkinson**  
**Substitute House Bill 294**  
**House Government Oversight Committee**  
**December 6, 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 Substitute House Bill 294. My name is Michael Parkinson and I live in Montgomery, northeast suburb of Cincinnati. I am opposed to Substitute House Bill 294 because I feel it aims to make voting harder for many Americans, resulting in a less democratic system.

To be honest I have no problem voting, but I live in an affluent suburb of Cincinnati, with a small never busy polling location and I can afford time away from work to vote. Unfortunately, this is not the case for a lot of Ohioans, so making voting easier and more accessible is really the only way to a better functioning democracy where all Ohioans are registered, and all Ohioans can easily and securely vote. We should by no means restricting the rights of voters as Sub. HB294 would, but instead we should be making it easier for all Americans to vote by providing automatic registration, time off, utilizing and online absentee ballot request system and providing pre-paid absentee ballots.

Below is a list of some of the issues I have with Sub. HB 294:

- The automated voter registration system proposed in the bill has been removed. Rather than removing that system, the bill should implement an actual automatic voter registration system, rather than an automated one.
- Sub HB 294 has now required absentee ballot requests to occur on a form provided by the Secretary of State, while right now Ohioans can make the request as long as the correct information is provided. This is an unnecessarily restrictive change to the absentee ballot request system.
- Sub HB 294 now restricts the Secretary of State or other officials from sending unsolicited absentee ballot applications to voters. The Secretary of State or other elected officials should be permitted to mail absentee ballot request forms to Ohioans. This unnecessary restriction will simply make it less likely that people participate in our democracy.

I'd also like to highlight some of the already pre-existing issues that continue from the original bill to Sub. HB 294:

- Eliminates Early Voting on the Monday before Election Day
- Explicitly prohibits the payment of prepaid postage for absentee ballots
- Prohibits a Board of Elections from counting a ballot if it is not included in the specific envelopes sent to voters

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Respectfully submitted,

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