



**Before the House Government Oversight Committee
House Bill 40 – Permanent Absent Voter List
Sponsor Testimony by Representative Michael J. Skindell
February 21, 2023**

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chairman Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan, and Members of the House Government Oversight Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 40, which creates a permanent absent voter list.

Under this legislation, registered voters who opt to join this list, will automatically be mailed an absentee ballot application prior to the beginning of early vote, in each election. Voters can choose to join the list in numerous ways such as, written applications, voter registration forms, change of name or address forms or absentee ballot applications. These lists will be maintained by each county board of elections.

Every elector deserves the fundamental right to cast their vote and make their voice heard. For some, going to the polls on Election Day is nearly impossible. People living with disabilities or those who are immunocompromised, those who lack easily accessible transportation or those with a busy work schedule, often opt to vote by mail. But even simply having to request an absentee ballot application every election is difficult and can often slip someone's mind. This legislation would allow for a simple and accessible option, for all people to continue voting, without it disrupting their daily lives.

In recent years, we have seen the rise of people who are opting to vote by mail. According to the Ohio Secretary of State's website, in the 2020 general election, there were 3,503,169 absentee ballots counted in the state of Ohio compared to just 1,879,630 in the 2016 general election.

In years with special elections, or unprecedented years with two primaries, people often don't know there is an election occurring, let alone know to request an absentee ballot application. Allowing a more convenient and efficient way for voters to receive their absentee ballot applications will aide in increasing voter participation in all elections and strengthen our democracy overall.

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chairman Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan, and Members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for your consideration of House Bill 40. I would be happy to answer any of your questions at this time.