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Senate General Government Committee
Senate Bill 87 Sponsor Testimony
Establish the day of each general election as a legal holiday
November 20, 2024

Chair Wilken, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member DeMora and members of the Senate General Government Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 87 which would make our general election day in November a state holiday.

The goal of this legislation is to help eliminate the employment related pressures that might prevent people from voting. This has been undertaken by over thirty states and can be accomplished in one of two ways: 1. By mandating paid time off for employees on election day or our approach, 2. To make our November election day a holiday.

If you click on the following link, you will be able to see an article that features an interactive map of the United States which shows which states have adopted which methods to relieve employment related hurdles that might prevent voters from casting their ballot:

<https://www.newsweek.com/map-shows-states-election-day-public-holiday-1950809>

Members of the Committee, it pains me to say this, but Ohio is behind the times on this topic. If you explore the link to the map, you will see that Ohio is one of only 19 states that has not made our general election day a holiday OR mandated employers provide paid time off to employees so they can vote. Currently, five states recognize Election Day as both a public holiday and require employers to provide paid time off for voting. Nine states have made Election Day a public holiday but do not mandate paid leave for voting. Seventeen states, including larger ones like California and Texas, require employers to offer paid time off to vote but do not designate Election Day as a public holiday.

I think having election day as a holiday helps remind everyone that this is a special moment on our national calendar. It also helps teach our future generations that they should learn to be voters.

According to data from the World Population Review, this past election, twenty states had a voter participation rate of above 70 percent. Ohio was 27th at 67%. As a point of reference, among the swing states Nevada and Arizona were both 65% and Wisconsin was at 75%.

Mr. Chairman and members of the General Government Committee, I hope you will join with me in support of making election day a holiday in Ohio, I think it will increase our voter turnout and more importantly be impactful for future Ohioans who will be our next generation of leaders.

I am happy to answer any questions at this time.