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Chair Wilkin, Vice Chair Reineke, and members of the Senate General Government Committee: thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Joint Resolution 3, to permit Election Day voter registration and voting.

I introduced SRJ 3 on May 16, 2023, for the purpose of putting the question before the voters for the November 7, 2023 election. Yesterday, the Ohio Ballot Board certified the citizen led initiative to enshrine in the Ohio Constitution voter's rights. This legislation is just one part of the ballot initiative would allow eligible persons to register to vote up to election day. Currently, the Ohio Constitution requires a person to register to vote for at least 30 days before an election. However, twenty-three states and Washington, D.C., have implemented same-day registration, which allows any legally, qualified resident of the state to register to vote and cast a ballot at the same time during the early voting period. Most offer Election Day registration where voters can both register and vote on Election Day. One notable example is the State of Montana, which even has Election Day voter registration written into the state constitution, and which was defended this year in 2024.¹ Among Midwestern states that allow same-day registration and voting on and up till Election Day, include Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota

Senate Joint Resolution 3 would retain the requirements in the Ohio Constitution that a person be at least 18, a U.S. citizen, and have been a resident of the state, county, township, or ward for "such time as may be provided by law." Currently, the Ohio Revised Code requires a person to have been a resident of Ohio for 30 days, but does not require the person to have been a resident of the person's county and precinct for any particular period.² This resolution would not affect this requirement.

The concern that some have regarding same-day voter registration is voter fraud and security of the election. That there is no means to have the time to cross-reference voter registration for eligibility. However, I am often amazed that a person can go to a store and sign up for a credit card and use it within minutes of approval. My quandary is why is the technology available for our financial systems, ie. Credit systems and not for our voting systems. I submit to you that they are.

¹ <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/same-day-voter-registration>

² <https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/download?key=20951>

One national system that Ohio has used in the past to investigate voter fraud is ERIC, the Electronic Registration Information Center: a multi-state database which links voter registration across state lines and helps to clean voter rolls. This is a system which Secretary of State Frank LaRose has found helpful in the past when rooting out incidences of voter fraud. Ohio had been a member of from the years of 2016 till 2023. It might now be helpful in the implementation of this legislation, should we choose to rejoin.

Over the past decade or so, there has been a firm misgiving among the public, with increasing frequency, that the primary security threat to our elections lies in fictitious bad-actors scheming to make a game out of our democracy and not in the continuous attacks on citizens' rights to exercise their voice through voting. Just this past summer, more than 158,000 citizens were purged from the Ohio voter rolls and more than half of those names represented citizens living in counties where the majority of voters of color reside.³ This comes just 5 years after a voter purge in 2019 where 20% of 235, 000 voters thought to be deceased, no longer Ohio residents, or duplicated were set to be purged, but were indeed eligible to vote.⁴ This method of voter suppression is happening in Ohio as a tidal wave of similar actions sweeps the nation. According to the Brennan Center, which cites the US Election Assistance Commission, over 19 million voters were removed from voter rolls between 2020 and 2022. A drastic 21% increase compared to the period of 2014-2016, which was yet another drastic increase of 33% from the period of 2006-2008.⁵

The reality is that the biggest threat to Ohio voters is legislatures not acting to ensure that their voting rights, which are granted by federal law through their citizenship, are honoured and protected through the work that we do and are instead disregarded and trampled upon. I urge that this committee move Senate Joint Resolution to the floor to help guard the rights of our voters.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I stand to answer any questions that you may have at this time.

³ <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2024/11/08/ohios-voting-purge-intends-to-diminish-our-collective-power/>

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/14/us/politics/ohio-voter-purge.html>

⁵ <https://www.brennancenter.org/issues/ensure-every-american-can-vote/vote-suppression/voter-purges>