



STATE OF OHIO
OFFICE OF ELGIN ROGERS JR.
RIFFE GOVERNMENT CENTER, TENTH FLOOR
77 S. HIGH STREET COLUMBUS, OH 43215

HB 180 Bar adverse employment action against precinct election officials

Chairman Johnson, Vice Chair Lear, Ranking Member McNally, and members of the Commerce and Labor committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 180 which will aide Ohio in address an important issue which is the poll worker shortage. Poll workers are essential to ensuring that elections run smoothly, securely, and fairly. However, each year, Boards of Elections across the state struggle to recruit and retain enough poll workers. According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, the turnover rate for election officials in 2022 was 39% (Ferrer). The turnover rate for election official has increased considerably over the past 20 years. Studies show that the turnover rate for election official will continue to increase in years to come at a faster rate than before.

The rising turnover rate among election officials can be attributed, in part, to the aging workforce approaching retirement. According to a survey conducted in 2020, 74% of election officials were 50 years of age or older (Early Voting Information Center). As the current workforce ages, we as a state need to encourage young Ohioans to step up and fill these rolls, and the way we do that is by removing barriers and improving access.

This bill will do just that, by prohibit employers from taking disciplinary action against an employee for attending training or serving as an election official. Additionally, employers will be prohibited from requiring employees to use their annual, vacation, or sick leave to perform their duties as long as they give reasonable notice of absence.

This bill will protect working Ohioans right to be civilly engaged and to do so without fear of punishment or repercussions. By protecting poll workers from punitive action, we send a strong message that Ohio values those who contribute to the democratic process and encourage young, working Ohioans to participate in helping our elections run smoothly, securely, and fairly.

I respectfully ask for your support in moving this legislation forward, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Thank you.

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Ferrer, Joshua, Daniel Thompson, and Rachel Orey. "Election Official Turnover Rates from 2000-2024." Bipartisan Policy Center, April 9, 2024.
<https://bipartisanpolicy.org/report/election-official-turnover-rates-from-2000-2024/>.

Early Voting Information Center, "2020 LEO Survey Codebook," January 25, 2021. Available at: https://evic.reed.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/leo2020_codebook.pdf.