

Members of the Ohio Elections Committee  
Ohio Statehouse  
Columbus, OH

Dear Chair Ray and Committee Members,

I write today as a concerned Ohio citizen to respectfully but firmly oppose **Senate Bill 293**, which proposes to eliminate the four-day “grace period” after Election Day for absentee ballots to be counted. Under SB 293, all marked absentee (mail-in) ballots would have to be delivered to county boards of elections *by the time polls close on Election Day*. [Ohio Senate+2journal-news+2](#)

## My Concerns

### 1. Disenfranchisement of Voters

- Eliminating the four-day post-election window disproportionately harms *domestic absentee voters* who, through no fault of their own, rely on the Postal Service. In recent elections, thousands of ballots — properly postmarked and mailed on time — have only arrived in those grace days. [Fair Elections Center+1](#)
- For instance, according to the Fair Elections Center, more than **9,500 ballots** in a recent election arrived during that four-day window. [Fair Elections Center](#) Under SB 293, these votes would simply not count.

### 2. Undermining Public Trust

- The grace period helps maintain trust in our election system. Many Ohioans rely on the USPS’s reliability, even though postal delays continue to be a nationwide challenge. [Fair Elections Center](#)
- By discarding votes that arrive after Election Day — through no fault of the voter — Ohio risks eroding confidence in its democratic processes.

### 3. Unjustified Restriction

- SB 293’s sponsors argue that counting only ballots received by Election Day brings Ohio in line with other states and ensures timeliness. [Ohio Capital Journal+1](#)
- But early voting remains available for a month, and SB 293 does **not** change that. [The Statehouse News Bureau](#)
- Removing the grace period reduces flexibility without a clear and compelling public benefit — especially when the current system has functioned securely and efficiently.

#### 4. **Potential for Disproportionate Impact**

- Rural communities, seniors, people without reliable transportation or easy access to drop-boxes or in-person voting may be more affected by stricter deadlines.
- The policy may inadvertently penalize responsible voters who simply lack the means or opportunity to hand-deliver ballots or guarantee same-day postal delivery.

#### 5. **Risk of Suppressing Legitimate Votes**

- As noted by opponents on the Senate floor, tens of thousands of ballots would have been discarded in recent elections if SB 293 had already been in effect. [Ohio Capital Journal+1](#)
- That’s not a theoretical risk. It’s a real threat to Ohioans who followed all rules, met deadlines, and expect their votes to count.

### **Why This Matters for Ohio**

- **Protecting Voting Rights:** Every eligible Ohio voter deserves a fair chance to have their voice heard.

- **Ensuring Election Integrity:** Rather than restricting access, we should be enhancing transparency, security, and accessibility.
- **Promoting Equity:** Changes like SB 293 may disproportionately burden marginalized or less-resourced communities.
- **Strengthening Democracy:** Trust in election outcomes depends on voters believing that valid ballots will be counted, even if they arrive shortly after Election Day.

### **My Ask**

Given these significant concerns, I respectfully urge the Committee to:

1. **Reject SB 293** in its current form.
2. **Preserve the four-day grace period** for domestic absentee ballots, which serves as an important safeguard for voters.
3. **Explore alternative reforms**, if needed, that do not disenfranchise Ohioans or undermine public trust — such as improving mail-in ballot tracking, expanding drop-box access, or investing in postal and election infrastructure.

The evidence does not support that the four day grace period affects the timeliness of election results. Let's be honest and call this bill what it is: a barely concealed power grab. Please respect the wishes of the people you represent and have the courage to do the right thing and prioritize the rights of Ohio voters—vote against SB 293.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Rosengarten