



**Opponent Testimony: Senate Bill 153
House General Government Committee
Jen Miller, League of Women Voters of Ohio
November 18, 2025**

Chair Ray, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Brent, esteemed committee, and committed legislative staff:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Ohio. We are fiercely nonpartisan. We never endorse candidates or parties. Our priority is and always will be voters. We seek to balance public policy goals of secure elections, fair election administration, and access for voters. That is why I stand here in opposition to Senate Bill 293 on behalf of our dues-paying members who live in all but a few Ohio House districts. This ill-conceived and ill-timed legislation would erect more barriers to voting and punish hardworking Ohio taxpaying citizens for something completely outside their control: the speed of the U.S. Postal Service.

Before we get into the substance, let's talk about process. This bill was fast-tracked in the Senate, with all three hearings happening while elections workers were running early vote centers, processing ballots cast by active duty military serving overseas, and curing provisional ballots. Even today, they have just finished certification and are conducting their audits. In other words, the Senate failed to give Ohio's hard working elections officials the chance to adequately analyze, comment, or discuss this legislation with their lawmakers. Given that election officials are the experts on how elections are administered, this body must pause all action on this legislation. Poor legislative processes almost always result in bad public policies and negative unintended consequences.

While the sponsors have argued that this legislation will make elections more secure, they have provided no evidence. In the meantime, this bill is guaranteed to disenfranchise voters in each of your districts and in every election cycle. Data shows us those folks who would be denied their right to vote are highly likely to be senior citizens, people with disabilities, and/or Republicans. Today, during high turnout elections, about 1 in 5 Ohioans are voting absentee.

	2016	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ballots Counted	5,607,641	4,496,834	5,974,121	1,965,507	4,201,368	3,964,530	5,851,387
Election Day	66.5%	69.6%	41.4%	79.8%	65.1%	76.1%	55.3%
Early in Person	11.9%	9.6%	22.5%	8.7%	13.1%	14.4%	26.3%
Absentee/Mail	21.5%	20.9%	35.9%	11.6%	21.9%	9.5%	18.4%

According to Secretary of State LaRose’s dashboard that tracks absentee and early in-person voting, more than 1 million senior citizens voted absentee during the 2024 General Election. Ohio’s unaffiliated and Republican voters also requested and returned absentee ballots at higher rates than Democrats.

Graph: 2024 General Election from Secretary of State’s Dashboard:

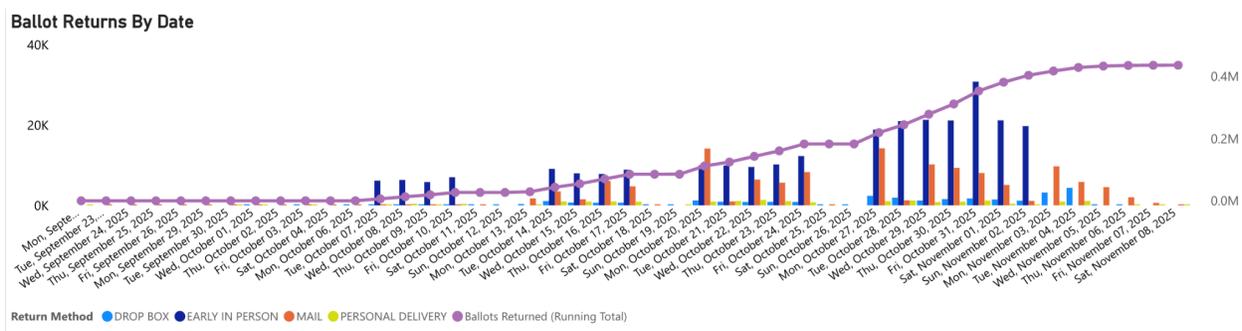
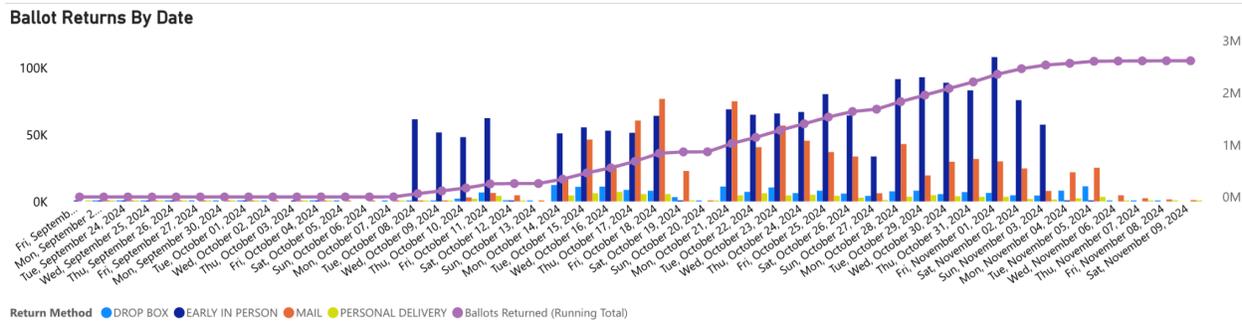


Graph: 2025 General Election from Secretary of State’s Dashboard:



Voting absentee is also the most preferred or accessible method for many Ohioans to cast their ballots, including people with disabilities, active-duty military and their families, college students, and those who either travel for work or work during the business hours of the Board of Elections.

As seen in the graphs below, from the Secretary of States dashboard, returning ballots by mail was also the preferred method during the 2024 General and 2025 General Elections.



Shortening the window of return is imprudent, given that absentee voters must rely on the US mail service to receive their ballot, and many will use it to return their ballot. Massive operational changes designed to reduce costs to taxpayers have caused US mail delivery times to be much slower than in previous decades. Yet this body keeps shortening rather than lengthening the absentee voting schedule. Unfortunately, USPS is underfunded and understaffed, which means an uptick in mail use during elections or the holidays, as well as extreme weather, can negatively impact the speed at which ballots are received by election officials. Rural Ohioans would especially be harmed by this legislation, as they often experience slower mail service but also face longer drives to their county’s only drop box or Early Vote Center.

As Ohio’s voting trends continue to show a clear shift toward early and absentee voting, this committee should prioritize accessibility and efficiency. You can improve the efficiency, security, and accessibility of voting absentee by doing the following:

- Allowing online absentee requests, which is a commonsense improvement that eases the process for voters, while also reducing administrative overhead for elections officials.
- Providing county BOEs the authority and funding to have more than one drop box per county, which weigh as much as 600 pounds, are bolted to the ground, have 24-hour video surveillance, are emptied by bipartisan teams of elections workers, and are weather, fire, and bomb resistant. Utilizing drop boxes is not only more secure than using the postal service, but it is also more efficient and direct.
- Allowing Boards of Elections to set up bipartisan teams in public spaces like libraries, community centers, and firehouses to collect ballots on weekdays, evenings, and weekends. This change would be an incredible new source of accessibility for Ohio voters who cannot easily travel to the Board of Elections during business hours.
- Making up budget shortfalls that come from the massive loss of federal funding, as well as the many unfunded mandates that the Ohio General Assembly has adopted over the past few years.
- Pushing back on the fraud fear-mongering. Absentee voting maintains election integrity through a secure process with multiple safeguards. It is the only form of voting that requires a voter to prove their identity twice. If they fail to prove their identity when they request their absentee ballot, their request will be denied - no ballot will be sent to them. If they fail to prove their identity when returning their ballot, it will not count.

Our elections system is the bedrock of our democratic republic, and so we ask this body not to rush changes to the system without deliberation, in which you hear the perspectives of diverse stakeholders. Abraham Lincoln once said, "Elections belong to the people," but that is only true if eligible Ohioans from all walks of life can freely and fairly participate.

Please reject this legislation, which would harm access to the ballot and could limit voter participation among active-duty military, senior citizens, people with disabilities, students, rural Ohioans, low-income voters, communities of color, and other historically disenfranchised groups. If you cannot find it within yourselves to reject it, please slow it down considerably so that one of the most critical stakeholders - elections officials - can help you understand the true consequences and risks before moving forward.

You can contact me to discuss this legislation or other democracy matters further at director@lwvohio.org or 614-469-1505.

Thank you.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio was formed in May 1920 out of Ohio's woman suffrage movement. The League is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.