

SB 293 written testimony 17 Nov 2025
by Debra Shankland

I have legally voted in most elections since my early 20's. While I have lived most of my life in Ohio, I have also legally voted in Connecticut and in Kentucky. Election laws had been a pretty sleepy conversation topic in the past 50 years, but in the most recent decade, they have become a flashpoint for disagreement, due to baseless accusations of mass fraud, all of which has been debunked, over and over. Across the nation, a rapid spate of new laws making it harder to vote have spawned new procedures, rules and forms; some of which have been repealed and then reinstated. This results in confusion, wasted taxpayer funds, and a general lack of confidence in the system. Note that this is caused by our own legislature, not fraudulent voting.

For example, August elections were eliminated, only to be immediately reinstated by the Secretary of State. Or maybe it was just the one August election? A ridiculously strict photo ID law has been instituted. Early voting has been curtailed, ballot drop boxes have been nearly eliminated, and the 10-day grace period for the acceptance of mailed-in ballots legally postmarked by the Monday before Election Day has been reduced from 10 days to just 4.

Now comes SB 293, which would eliminate Ohio's 4-day grace period for absentee ballots that were MAILED ON TIME and postmarked by the Monday preceding Election Day altogether. Why? Is the postal service suddenly as reliable as it was prior to 2016?

Nearly a third of the Ohio voters who voted early in 2024 used the USPS to return their absentee ballots. More than 9500 of those mail-in ballots were received at the Boards of Elections during the 4-day post-election acceptance window. SB 293 would have all those ballots thrown out.

SB 293 has nothing to do with election security, and everything to do with disenfranchising voters, particularly the elderly, people with disabilities, election workers, and busy college students, who all tend to use Vote-by-Mail. I vote absentee because I am a PEO; I drive to the Board of Elections to place my completed ballot in our county's only drop box. I'm able to do that because thank God I have the ability to drive and a reliable car, and as a retiree, my schedule is flexible. I consider myself lucky! Why would you want to disenfranchise law-abiding Ohioans whose ballots are delayed by the post office, through no fault of their own? Because they are too poor or physically unable to drive to the Board of Elections?

I will note that the state does not pay the postage on mailed-in ballots. This is a hurdle, not just because of the cost that keeps going up, but also because it's unclear how much postage is needed. In the past, I myself have occasionally delayed mailing my ballot for over a week because I needed to make a side trip to the post office.

Every single valid vote cast by every eligible citizen must be counted. Anything less is fraud against the electorate. Please reject the unnecessary SB 293 to maintain some accessibility and fairness in Ohio elections.

Thank you.

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