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Chair Sharon A. Ray
Chair, General Government Committee
Ohio House of Representatives

Members of the General Government Committee

Dear Chair Ray and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to urge you to OPPOSE Senate Bill 293. By eliminating the current limited “grace period” for absentee ballots that are postmarked by the day before the election but arrive after Election Day, SB 293 would needlessly disenfranchise lawful Ohio voters — particularly students, military and overseas voters, and rural residents — while addressing a problem that, by every credible measure, is vanishingly small in Ohio.

1. Proven voter fraud in Ohio is extremely rare.
Ohio’s own elections records and reporting show very few proven cases relative to the millions of ballots cast. Secretary of State referrals for potential wrongdoing have produced only a tiny number of charges — a pattern repeatedly reported by Ohio press outlets analyzing official referrals and prosecutions. For example, reporting shows that hundreds of referrals produced only a handful of charges, and that referrals represent a minute fraction of the roughly 5.8–6.0 million ballots cast in recent general elections. [Ohio Capital Journal+1](#)
2. Ohio elections are secure and auditable.
Ohio maintains a paper trail for votes, bipartisan pre- and post-election processes, and routine post-election audits that verify the accuracy of results. The Secretary of State’s office reports near-perfect audit results (for example, reporting a 99.99% accuracy rate in recent post-election audits), and Ohio law requires audits and preserves voter-verified paper records. These are the sorts of safeguards that protect the integrity of our elections without disenfranchising voters. [Ohio Secretary of State+1](#)
3. SB 293 would disproportionately harm voters who already face legitimate delivery or access challenges.
 - Students studying out-of-state: College students move frequently and routinely report problems receiving or returning absentee ballots in time; election protection groups and campus voting guides have documented dozens of student complaints in recent election cycles. Requiring ballots to be received by Election Day would remove a practical, legal fallback for students who do everything required (request timely, mail their ballot before Election Day) but are delayed by mail logistics or campus moves. [All Voting is Local+1](#)

- Military and overseas voters: UOCAVA voters rely on specially timed transmission and return windows because international mail is unpredictable; federal guidance and the Federal Voting Assistance Program note that mail delays and regional postal reliability issues can meaningfully affect overseas and military voters, which is why many states — and federal UOCAVA protections — provide additional time to return ballots. Cutting the grace period would risk disenfranchising service members and overseas citizens who mailed ballots on time but saw delays outside their control. [Federal Voting Assistance Program+1](#)

- Rural voters and USPS variability: While the USPS performs well for Election Mail in many measures, election administrators and voter-protection groups continue to document localized delays and other operational problems that can cause ballots mailed in good faith before Election Day to arrive late. Eliminating the limited window for timely-postmarked ballots converts logistical errors into permanent disqualifications for otherwise-valid votes. [USPS+1](#)

4. The bill’s purported justification (preventing “late” ballots) does not match the scale of actual risk and instead erects a new barrier to voting.

Supporters point to the desire for faster final results, but Ohio’s procedures already include secure handling, post-election audits, and verification measures. Shortening the return window addresses a problem that Ohio’s own audit and enforcement systems have shown to be extremely small in scale, while imposing new and uneven burdens on voters with the least reliable access to timely mail service. [Ohio Secretary of State+1](#)

5. SB 293 would have a disproportionate, discriminatory effect in practice.

Rules that require ballots to be physically received by a deadline — even when mailed on time — tend to fall harder on voters with less consistent access to fast mail service, or who must rely on third-party delivery (students, those abroad, rural residents, and lower-income voters). When a rule has a predictable disparate impact on specific groups, it warrants the highest scrutiny before being adopted. Nationwide analyses and Ohio voter-protection reporting make clear these are not hypothetical harms. [All Voting is Local+1](#)

Conclusion and request

Ohio already has robust, bipartisan election safeguards: voter-verified paper records, mandatory audits, bipartisan boards of elections, and thorough investigation of credible allegations. Those systems — and the extremely low rate of proven fraudulent voting — show that we should be improving access and strengthening safeguards where needed, not narrowing timeframes in ways that will disenfranchise lawful voters. For these reasons, I respectfully request the General Government Committee OPPOSE Senate Bill 293 and protect the limited, common-sense accommodation Ohio currently provides to voters who mail their ballots on time but are delayed by circumstances beyond their control.

Thank you for your consideration. I am available to provide additional documentation or data if helpful.

Sincerely,
Pierre Wolfe

