

Chair Ray, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Brent, and members of the House General Government Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Joseph Kaiser. I am a resident of Norwalk, OH, an engaged voter, and someone who believes deeply in protecting fair and accessible elections for all Ohioans. I am strongly opposed to SB 293.

SB 293 would require that all absentee ballots—from elderly voters, disabled voters, working Ohioans, and anyone voting by mail—must be *received* by their county board of elections no later than 7:30 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted. Ohio has never operated under such an unrealistic standard, and there is no functional justification for imposing it now. The bill would disenfranchise thousands of lawful voters whose ballots were sent on time but delayed for reasons completely outside their control.

We know from this year’s reporting—including statements from county boards of elections and bipartisan election officials—that mail delays remain unpredictable and widespread. The United States Postal Service itself has acknowledged inconsistent delivery timelines. And yet SB 293 places the risk of these delays entirely on the voter. It punishes Ohioans who follow every rule, complete their ballot properly, and mail it well before Election Day, only to have the Postal Service fail to deliver it in time. That is not election integrity—it is voter suppression disguised as administrative “efficiency.”

This bill also creates profound inequities. Voters in rural communities with slower postal routes, elderly voters who rely on caregivers, voters who work multiple jobs and cannot stand in long Election Day lines—all are disproportionately harmed. The state should not design laws that structurally disenfranchise the very people elections are supposed to serve.

Ohio’s current system already contains safeguards: ballots must be postmarked on time, tracked, verified, and authenticated. These rules work. And they allow ballots postmarked by Election Day to arrive within a reasonable period—just as they do for Uniformed Services and overseas voters. SB 293 offers no compelling reason to strip this common-sense accommodation from everyone else.

The truth is simple: If Ohio lawmakers were genuinely concerned about election integrity, they would invest in improving the Postal Service, strengthening boards of elections, and expanding access—not cutting the timeline so aggressively that lawful votes are discarded. This bill does not protect elections; it obstructs them.

I ask you to consider my testimony, respect Ohio voters, and vote NO on this harmful and unnecessary bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Joseph Kaiser  
Norwalk, OH