



**Senate Bill 82 Testimony by Kelly Dufour, Common Cause Ohio  
Before the Senate General Government Committee  
April 6, 2025**

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gaverone, Ranking Member Blackshear and members of the Senate General Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate Bill 82. I would have appreciated the opportunity to testify in person, but had previous work travel scheduled.

My name is Kelly Dufour and I'm the voting and elections manager at Common Cause Ohio. Common Cause is a nonpartisan organization focused on strengthening public participation in our democracy and ensuring that our government is transparent and accountable to its citizens.

One of the priorities of my work is attending and tracking activities at the Boards of Elections (BOE). In recent years, I have worked with fellow voting advocates to attend regular meetings and track county-level election administration in more than 48 counties across the state. I personally enjoy the work and find it fascinating to hear how counties of varying sizes administer the same directives issued by the Secretary of State).

During my attendance at BOE meetings, particularly in 2024, election officials have reported to their boards multiple physical and cyber safety threats. Senate Bill 82 is necessary and will provide basic personal protections for election officials who are working to carry out what should be routine, bipartisan procedures for election administration.

Last year, I witnessed election officials report the following safety concerns to their boards:

- A clarifying directive from the Secretary of State that poll observers could not bring firearms into polling locations,
- Comprehensive safety plans for processing mail with "white, powdery substance,"
- Efforts to pushback on harmful and misleading disinformation online,
- Plans to reinforce the dropbox security procedures to prevent voter harassment and equipment explosions,
- Redesigning the reception area of offices to accommodate staff safety from people intent on causing harm,
- Increasing surveillance,
- Extensive safety plans for voter and poll worker safety, and
- Plans to escort poll worker trainees out to their cars after evening training events.

This is not normal. State law needs to protect election officials now more than ever. Unfortunately, our county election officials and their teams are caught in the middle of national and even state-level hateful election denialism rhetoric for what should be a benign, bipartisan county agency function.

It is disheartening to hear staff accounts and efforts to mitigate threats to their personal safety, knowing that federal funding is drying up. And while I witness county Boards of Elections repeatedly respond with proactive professionalism, they do so with minimal assistance from the Secretary of State.

Providing provisions for protecting BOE staff members' personal information is the least our state can do for their service.

Thank you for your thoughtful review of Senate Bill 82.