



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 153

Presented to
The Ohio Senate General Government Committee

4/29/2025

Harrison Siders, *on behalf of*
FGA Action

Good afternoon, Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the Committee:

My name is Harrison Siders, and I am here today on behalf of FGA Action, a proud advocate for protecting the integrity of our elections.

I am here to urge your strong support for Senate Bill 153. This is a common-sense measure that strengthens Ohio's elections by ensuring that only eligible citizens are voting, while maintaining transparency, security, and public confidence in our democratic processes.

Senate Bill 153 accomplishes several critical objectives. First and foremost, it institutes a requirement that voters' U.S. citizenship be verified when they register to vote or update their registration. Right now, citizenship is simply self-affirmed under penalty of law—but without any requirement that election officials actually verify it. SB 153 closes that loophole. Under the bill, election officials would use Bureau of Motor Vehicles records or documentary proof of citizenship to verify voters, preventing noncitizens from voting while protecting legitimate voters.

The bill also strengthens ongoing voter roll maintenance by mandating regular, monthly comparisons of the Statewide Voter Registration Database against both BMV and Social Security records. This proactive approach ensures that the voter rolls remain accurate and up-to-date—not just before federal elections, but year-round.

Furthermore, SB 153 secures absentee ballot procedures by prohibiting unattended ballot drop boxes, ensuring that ballots are returned directly to election officials either inside the board of elections or at a staffed drop-off location. It tightens rules around who can deliver a ballot on someone else's behalf, another important safeguard against ballot harvesting abuses.

Finally, the bill brings much-needed accountability to the petition process for initiatives and referenda, requiring paid petition circulators to disclose their status and affiliations. Transparency is essential if we are to protect the voice of Ohio's voters from outside manipulation.

At its heart, Senate Bill 153 respects the rights of lawful voters while putting in place practical, achievable safeguards that will fortify our election system against fraud. Protecting election integrity should not be a partisan issue; it is fundamental to our republic.

I support SB 153 because it promotes trust, transparency, and fairness in Ohio's elections. I respectfully urge this committee to advance this important bill without delay.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer any questions.