

May 2, 2025

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Re: Opposition to proposed Ohio Senate Bill 153

I am semi-retired from work in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors, and as a small business owner for the past 25 years. As a citizen, I have always been quietly but actively engaged in the public affairs of the communities in which I've lived, as well as our democracy. I have been a member of the League of Women Voters; I've run for public office; I study issues and routinely vote; I have campaigned for and financially supported leaders that I believe will serve the common good; and I have circulated petitions to secure signatures to put proposed legislation in front of voters for their vote (or not), and to qualify candidates for the ballot.

I am truly an ardent fan of democracy and it's because I understand and have seen what life is like for those who don't live in a democracy. I've lived in countries such as the Philippines and Brazil and I've read about far more countries whose citizens live under the oppressive veil of a dictatorship or autocrat. Through my own experiences as a voter, political canvasser, petition circulator and more, I understand how important it is to actualize our democracy by giving an informed voice to my fellow citizens. I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 153 which seeks to rewrite Ohio's election laws. In short, the bill seeks to make citizen engagement in our democracy more difficult (e.g. more requirements to collect petition signatures); it adds more requirements for Ohio voters to cast a ballot (e.g. proof of birth name for women and the removal of drop boxes for voters) and it adds unnecessary, expensive and burdensome regulations on county boards of elections (the removal of drop boxes increases foot traffic and the need for more staff).

The United States has been hailed for its democracy throughout the world. I implore Ohio elected officials to support and enhance our democracy, rather than add more and more restrictions for citizens engaged in voting and the approval of legislation. Please let the will of the people speak on behalf of the common good, rather than political bias, to protect, advance and preserve our democracy.

Former President Jimmy Carter once said, "In our democracy, the only title higher and more powerful than that of president is the title of citizen. It is every citizen's right and duty to help shape the future legacy of our nation."