

Interested Party Testimony on Senate Bill 153

Addressing the Unfunded Mandate on Ohio's Election Infrastructure

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide Interested Party testimony on Senate Bill 153. I appreciate the legislature's continued commitment to strengthening the integrity of Ohio's elections. However, I must express serious concern that, as currently written, SB153 imposes an unfunded mandate on Ohio's county Boards of Elections.

SB153 proposes new procedures intended to verify voter eligibility and citizenship status—an objective I fully support. However, the bill does not allocate the necessary funding or technical resources to implement these procedures. This places an undue burden on local Boards of Elections, which are already responsible for managing the demands of election administration.

Since these measures are essential to protecting the integrity of our elections, then the General Assembly must recognize that the responsibility for funding them cannot fall solely on local officials. Verifying voter eligibility through enhanced database matching and handling additional documentation require upgrades in staffing, training, software, and data integration tools.

Expecting BOEs to carry out these expanded duties without additional state support is not only impractical—it risks undermining the bill's own objectives by overburdening the very infrastructure it seeks to improve. Elections are part of our nation's critical infrastructure, and deserve both robust policies and the funding to implement them effectively.

I respectfully urge the Committee to amend SB153 to include a clear funding mechanism to ensure these new responsibilities are carried out efficiently and equitably across all counties.

A secure, fair, and functional election system requires not just strong laws, but also the resources to enforce them.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Donna Young
Hamilton County