

I am Karen Eliot (or Karen S. Eliot according to my Voter Registration and Karen Sue Eliot on my driver's license). I am writing to express my dismay at the proposed bill SB153 which would make it harder for me to vote. I am registered to vote in Columbus and have lived and voted here for over 30 years. I found it relatively easy to update my registration when I moved and have voted without any problems. But, with SB153, a diligent election officer could reasonably worry that the discrepancies in the way my name appears, might subject her to criminal penalties should she fail to ask me to vote provisionally. It's a slight mismatch, but would the election worker want to take the chance that, under SB153, she might face a fine or worse? I don't think so.

Many people face bigger problems if they change their names (say, after marriage, as many women do) or they haven't gotten new drivers licenses when they moved. Lots of drivers who move from one area of town to another don't rush to the BMV to update their licenses, but instead, wait until time for them to renew. Perfectly legal. But if SB153 passes, it will put them in violation when they try to vote. Think about that—the additional bureaucracy and administrative hassle this would entail. Yet another thing to remember when one moves. The easiest thing will be to opt not to vote. Is that possibly the goal of this legislation?

I also have experiences as a poll worker. I have been volunteering at the polls for the last five years. In that time, I have been incredibly impressed with how smoothly and professionally the local Board of Elections manages to run our elections. The men and women who make our elections run so well are hardworking, courteous, professional, and extremely careful to adhere to all election laws. They work very hard for us. We should be grateful to every one of them. Instead, this bill proposes to pile more work and responsibility on top of their already heavy workloads. SB 153 will effectively result in a number of unfunded mandates that simply pile more responsibilities and challenges on top of our already overworked election staff. I cannot support this kind of thoughtless imposition on them.

Governor DeWine has said that the legislature already imposed drastic changes to the elections laws and there should be no more changes during this term. SB 153 promises enormous changes and the bill is very rushed. I urge the legislature to slow down in its implementation and think through all the consequences of this bill. Otherwise, you will hurt your own voters.

Please do not pass this very damaging bill. I urge you to think this through carefully.