

May 27, 2025

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

My name is Scott Sibley, and I am a citizen of Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am writing to express my opposition to SB 153.

SB 153 is a big government power grab to make it more difficult for Ohioans to exercise their right to vote. Why would our elected officials want to make it harder for Ohioans to vote? Requiring documentary proof of citizenship at the time of voter registration would virtually shut down high school and college voter drives, online registration, citizen led public voter registration drives, and registrations in libraries and other public places, all hallmarks of our democratic system and rights of passage for newly eligible 18-year-olds and naturalized citizens. Instead, citizens would have to make sure all of their papers are in order (passports, birth certificates, marriage licenses) and likely appear in person at a government office and be subject to the whims of bureaucracy. Any misstep in the process could come with the threat of prosecution. This is not the democracy we all learned about in high school civics class.

The losers of this bill will be the newly voter-eligible 18- year-olds, college students moving to a new dorm, elderly people moving into a care facility, veterans stationed overseas or moving between bases, poor people who are evicted from their homes and forced to move, rural people who change their address and marital status and may have to take off work to travel long distances to the nearest, understaffed government office to get a birth certificate or passport and then to a board of elections office to present their papers.

SB153 is a solution in search of a problem. There already exist numerous checks and balances for verifying the eligibility of voters. Those attempting to vote illegally already risk severe criminal convictions and deportation. The cases of non-citizens illegally attempting to vote are in the fractions of a percent of all votes cast. And for this you are going to place onerous requirements on the millions of law-abiding citizens?

SB 153 does not stop at the right to vote in its attack on democracy. SB 153 would also add bureaucratic obstacles and intimidating threats of arrest and imprisonment for anyone exercising their right to the initiative petition process.

Under SB 153, provisional ballots will skyrocket, which, along with the many other bureaucratic requirements of the bill will place massive unfunded mandates on local Boards of Election at a time when local governments are already strapped. Will the ensuing chaos result in a more efficient, fair process we can all rely on?

Years ago, my 86-year-old, disabled father wanted to get a State ID card. He could no longer drive but wanted to ensure he had some official form of identification. So, I gathered his birth certificate, social security card and other documents and took him down to the local BMV. Our first attempt was not successful. After waiting in line, we were told we were missing some form of proof of address or something. So I wheeled him out of the office and loaded his wheelchair back in the car to try another time. Our second attempt was not successful either. Another customer suggested we try a different registrar which was maybe a little more understanding, so we drove across town to another location. We were eventually successful but is this any way to treat an elderly, World War II Army Air Force

veteran? I cannot imagine that we would have made it through the new SB 153 government-imposed process.

Senators, are you ready to face the backlash after the first general election, from tens of thousands of voters, many of whom intended to vote for you, who are told they cannot vote? That is a right that Americans will not take kindly to being told no to. SB 153 is an anti-democratic, anti-freedom, big government, bureaucratic imposition which will not result in all eligible voters being enabled to exercise their right to vote.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any question you may have.

Sincerely,

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