

Senate Bill 153

Interested Party Testimony, Tuesday, May 27, 2025

Why are Out-of-State Issued IDs Considered Proof of Citizenship in Ohio?

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as an interested party regarding Senate Bill 153. I appreciate your efforts to ensure only that only United States citizens vote in Ohio elections. However, I have serious concerns that SB153 allows the use of driver's licenses/state IDs (DL/ID) issued by other states as proof of citizenship to register and vote in Ohio.

I request that the committee consider amending SB153 to explicitly prohibit the use of out-of-state driver's licenses or state-issued IDs as proof of U.S. citizenship for voter registration and voting in Ohio for the following reasons:

- Beyond the obvious concern that a voter registering or voting in Ohio should present identification issued by Ohio – the state in which they intend to vote – there are significant problems with accepting out-of-state driver's licenses or IDs for this purpose. These licenses vary widely in the information they contain and the standards under which they are issued. Poll workers and Boards of Elections staff cannot reasonably be expected to verify or interpret citizenship indicators from 50 different states.
- There is no national standard or consistent indicator of citizenship status on driver's licenses. Some states may include or omit citizenship designations on driver's licenses and state IDs. This inconsistency opens the door to both unintentional error and intentional misuse when registering or voting.
- Ohio law already recognizes the importance of transitioning to in-state driver's licenses. New residents are required to surrender their out-of-state driver's license and obtain an Ohio license within 30 days if they intend to drive in the state. It is both contradictory and concerning for an individual to claim Ohio residency for voting purposes while continuing to hold a driver's license that legally identifies them as a resident of another state.
- Allowing out-of-state licenses to serve as proof of citizenship in Ohio sends conflicting messages about residency requirements and undermines the integrity of the voter registration process. Ohio has a legitimate interest in ensuring that only eligible citizens who are actual residents of the state participate in its elections.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory M Jevnikar