

TESTIMONY OF ANDREA R. YAGODA OPPOSING SB 153

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear and Members of the Senate General Government Committee. My name is Andrea R. Yagoda. I have been a resident of Ohio for 51 years and have been a resident of Delaware County for 47 years. Mr Brenner I am one of your constituents. I stand before you today to oppose SB 153.

Do you people ever get tired of proposing solutions to non existent problems? Is it too hard to find solutions to real problems, like school funding? As an Ohio voter, I am tired of hearing legislators say that one ineligible vote is too many and then the same legislature tries to resolve the so called problem with a broad brush. Last November 7,050 eligible, let me repeat, 7,050 eligible voters were denied the right to vote when their provisional ballots were discarded because either they did not have a proper ID with them when they went to vote, they failed to provide the ID within the measly four (4) days you gave them to do so (and keep in mind the fourth day is Saturday, a day in which most BOEs/deputy registrars are only open half a day) or due to a clerical mistake on the provisional envelope. Is it so hard for you to believe that not everyone can take time off work to head to the BMV and then the BOE. Is it hard to imagine that some BOEs may be over an hour away from one's residence or employment. And yet this bill proposes to cancel the valid registration of one who fails to make that four (4) day deadline. Why? What could be the rationale for this drastic step? A friend of mine went to get a real ID for a trip she is going on. Went to the BMV in Delaware. First trip there was told her credit card statement and

papers from the military were not adequate to get her real ID. She was told she needed a utility bill which she did not have since the bill is in her husband's name. Second trip returned with her military ID, military documents sent to her home (the guy never told her she could use to the board a plane), bank statement and credit card statement. He then told her that the seal on her California birth certificate was not good as California no longer used that seal. She contacted CA was advised that their seal had not changed they fast tracked the certificate to her. She brought it back on her third trip and showed the BMV worker that clearly the seal had not changed and he merely shrugged. Then he told her that because she was married she could NOT use her maiden name. She has never changed her name and her professional name is her maiden name. She brought her marriage certificate because she thought she had to. She argued with him and showed him again all the documents to establish she had not changed her name. He stood firm. So she went to the social security office and advised them what she was told and why she had to change her name. She was told they were seeing a lot of this lately. Social security changed her name to her husband's and she went back and finally demanded to see another person and get her temporary real ID which she said the airport would not accept but her military ID would suffice. She was teary eyed telling me this story. What if she needed to get a license or ID to vote and only had 4 days to do it in or risk the cancellation of her voter registration? And to add insult to injury no one at the BMV told her she would have to re register to vote and did not offer to assist her in doing so.

I am a regular attendee at the Delaware County BOE meetings. I have witnessed provisional ballots being discarded due to “clerical errors”. Ballots where both a democrat and a republican pollworker checked the box on the provisional envelope to indicate that an ID was shown but the ID number was omitted; ballots where the box was not checked either way but the ID number was included; and instances wherein the box is checked indicating no ID was shown but the ID number was included. And then there was the homeless man who actually drew a map of where he “resided” but inadvertently transposed the last two numbers of his ID. The Board had no choice but to discard these ballots even though the thinking was that an ID had probably been shown as all the information matched that of a registered voter. These voters may have believed they had shown ID and did not need to head to the BOE within the four (4) days. But now you want to subject more Ohioans to the provisional ballot process. Why, especially since we know based on facts, and let me repeat we know based on facts that voter fraud and non citizens voting is almost non existent. You would rather discard the ballots of 7,050 eligible voters for the sake of one fraudulent vote. Do I have that right? Make it make sense for me.

One cannot help but wonder what is the real purpose of this bill? Is it to raise false concerns sowing doubts about the integrity of our elections? Hasn't the republican party already done its job in that regard? Ohio is, we are told, the election gold standard. We have a 99+ accuracy rate. Could the real intent of this bill be to disenfranchise certain classes of Ohio voters? Thus far, there has been one proponent testimony for this bill. Mr. Sider, a lobbyist for the America First

Legal Foundation a conservative right wing group on the advisory board of Project 2025. Their place on the advisory board of Project 2025 should be a huge red flag for many of us. Your party even tried to disassociate itself from it in 2024 and we are seeing it in real time action as I speak. If this is not enough to establish the intent of this bill as disenfranchisement, the fact that bills like this are being introduced by republican led states in a concerted effort speaks volumes. And I bet this bill is very similar to all those other bills being introduced and yet non citizen voting has not been a problem in this country.

In 2011 litigation in Kansas revealed that 31,000 eligible voters over three (3) years were denied the right to vote because they failed to produce the documents to establish citizenship. Honestly, do you think catching one ineligible voter is worth throwing away 10,000 eligible voters a year? Not me. I would rather have one fraudulent voter than exclude 31,000 because voting is such an important, fundamental and basic right. It is our avenue to determine who will govern and what type of state or nation we will be.

If the federal SAVE Act does not pass, will we have two (2) different standards for voting eligibility in state verses federal elections like they did in Arizona. We know that did not turn out well. Maybe the purpose is to confuse the voters as we know republicans took pride and bragged about confusing the voters when it came to redistricting. And where is the funding to educate the voters about all these changes to voting proposed in this bill?

You know who I worry about if this bill passes? Women like my sister who married and took their husband's last name. Who found out after 50 years of

marriage that her marriage license has a typographical error as her born name was Yagoda but her certificate says "Vagoda". She is panicking that she may have to marry again to have a corrected marriage certificate. Women not men will bear the biggest brunt of this bill and we know how Project 2025 thinks about women.

I worry about seniors like my mom, age 88 who had to move here and who no longer had her birth certificate and only had her Ketubah reflecting her marriage. Luckily she would have had me to run interference to get the documents she would need to register to vote but many in her assisted living facility did not have children locally to assist them with the process. This bill is not clear whether one could merely provide the documentation by phone in the case of ID numbers or by mail, fax, email for other documentation nor does the bill clearly indicate whether the copies must be certified. If a personal visit to the BOE is required this would raise many other concerns. This needs to be clarified as each BOE should not have different standards.

I wonder about the Linden area woman, age 65, widowed I met in 2023 who was unaware that she could no longer vote with a utility bill. She had no phone, no internet, no computer, no car and her state ID had expired two (2) years ago and she was advised that she would need all the documentation again which she could not locate. How is she supposed to obtain the documents to establish citizenship if questioned? Do you know how much a birth certificate is in Ohio? \$21.50, marriage license in Franklin County about \$2.00 but every probate court sets their own fees. \$25.00 may not seem like a lot of money to you but for

many that is a week's food budget or helps to keep the heat and electric on. You know what is missing in this bill? A way to assist these folks to get the documentation? Why? Are these the folks you want to disenfranchise? You know what else I do not see in this bill? Additional funding for the county BOEs and BMVs.

I worry about all potential voters in county jails who will not be able to vote by mail if out of their residence county and all the others who have moved out of one county to another county in Ohio and failed to timely update their voter registration and are unable to get to the BOE to vote provisionally as required under this bill. As you are aware each county has only one BOE. Many are not accessible by public transportation and many are miles away from the voters in that county. I have assisted in jail voting with the Franklin County BOE. One year we had over 100 voters there once they learned that they could vote. Many were excited to vote and many knowledgeable about the Issues being presented on the ballot.

I worry about all those who went to the BMV and changed their address, thought the BMV had notified the BOE and only learned on election day that this was not the case. This was especially prevalent for those that moved from Columbus Franklin County to Columbus Delaware County. This bill would require all those voters to vote provisionally at the BOE rather than their precinct as they do now either during early vote or on election day. Why? Folks who came after work to vote will now be required to drive across the county in the hopes they get to the BOE in time. And why must folks who moved but are still in the same

voting precinct and are at the correct voting precinct location have to vote provisionally verses casting a regular ballot as they do now? And women who either got married or divorced and changed their name but live in the same precinct and even the same residence who have their marriage certificate or judgment entry reflecting their new name will now have to vote provisionally. Will the provisional envelopes have places for pollworkers to mark that the voter provided proof of citizenship; name change; etc. More work for poll workers and more opportunities for “clerical errors”.

And requiring that BOEs refer to prosecutors anyone who fails to provide proof of citizenship after two requests to do so? Have the authors of this bill checked how long every state takes to provide birth certificates when requested. Franklin County is at least three (3) weeks if a request is made online and 4 (four) to six (6) weeks if a request is made by mail and one is required to download the application in order to make such a request so if you do not have access to a computer you cannot print the application. And some states the wait is six (6) months. And if married in another state, how long would it take to get a certified copy of a marriage certificate or a name change entry from another state?

Why are we even considering outlawing dropboxes? There have been no allegations of “ballot harvesting” in Ohio nor has anyone tried to set a dropbox on fire. Unlike the examples give by Mr. Siders our dropboxes are on the property of the BOE under constant surveillance and not on a public street. The BOEs have expended monies to make sure the boxes are secure and surveilled. Dropboxes

are an accessible way for Ohioans to ensure their ballots are received in time. Many voters do not trust the postal service and with anticipated cuts to the post office this is a real threat. Many voters cannot get to the BOE during the hours they remain open. Having dropboxes are less disruptive than voters dropping off ballots at the BOEs when personnel have to stop what they are doing to address those returning their ballots. Last year the directive requiring all those dropping off a ballot not theirs to personally enter the BOE caused an increase the line for provisional voters in the early vote center I was at as they were told to drop off and sign the attestation at the provisional desk. This body should be encouraging and working to make voting easier not more difficult. Are you really so afraid of the voters?

In a special election held in August 23 called by this body, months after you “outlawed” August elections, but made an exception for yourselves, Ohio voters rejected your proposal to severely limit the citizen’s right to place an initiative on the ballot. 57% of the voters said no. Ohioans want the right of redress. The right to address those issues you refuse to. Now we have another attempt to circumvent the will of the people by limiting that right through intimidation to discourage volunteers from partaking in the process of signature collection. How does a committee designate “witnesses” to litigation when no one knows what the subject of possible litigation will be? And what is compensation? Do you know how ORC 1.03 defines anything of value? It lists a number of items and then the catch all “*every other thing of value*”. Can you think of anything that has no value? Even an empty aluminum soda can has value? If I provide a

clipboard to a volunteer I have provided something of value and is that compensation? Must that volunteer wear a badge and list me on all his/her petitions? The bill requires that all volunteers submit themselves to the jurisdiction of the state of Ohio but does not limit that submission to only matters relating to the role as signature gatherer. This is nothing but scare tactics instilling the fear of litigation.

And why require that those who sign the petition be registered at the time of signing and at the address listed on the petition on the date signed rather than when the petitions reach the BOE? Is it to limit the registration of new voters? This provision makes even more work for the BOEs. Now when a petition comes in the BOE checks the name, address and signature of each individual signing the petition to see if the registration matches the information they have. Now the BOE will be required to check the date the petition was signed against the date of the registration and possible change of address/name, thereby making more work for the BOEs.

There are so many objections to this bill but there is not enough time to write about them all especially since the committee chose to schedule the hearing on the day after Memorial weekend requiring testimony be submitted on Memorial day, an obvious attempt to curtail the testimonies herein.

I respectfully request that the committee vote no on this bill.

Andrea R. Yagoda