

Senate General Government Committee
Opposition testimony to SB153
May 27, 2025
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Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Senate Bill 153 and its companion bill in the House, HB233.

I have lived in Ohio my entire life and have voted in every election since 1984. I got married in 1997 and as is tradition took my husband's last name. However, getting a Real ID 3 years ago turned into a 2 hour fiasco because I had to drive to downtown Cleveland and get a certified copy of my marriage license and bring that back to the BMV in my hometown.

I have lived in the same house in suburban Cleveland for 28 years and I have never had to re-register to vote. I can't promise the state of Ohio that I will never move from this house. Should that happen, I would like to know EXACTLY what I need to register to vote at a new address.

In the sponsor hearing, Senator Blackshear asked what the acceptable documents are to verify citizenship and how the voters will be informed about them. Senator Gavarone seemed to respond that all one would need is their Real ID but I have to say that the lack of clarity in her response didn't give me much confidence that the true purpose of this bill isn't to keep eligible voters away from the polls.

As is so often the case in the Ohio Statehouse, our lawmakers have put forth another needless bill often referred to as "a solution looking for a problem". Prior to last year's presidential election, Secretary of State Frank LaRose said that "Ohio is home to one of the most secure election systems in the nation". And, the sponsors of this bill have been elected and re-elected many times over by Ohio voters. So, what's the problem?

According to Senator Gavarone, 138 people that "lacked citizenship status" voted in prior elections and just one case of a noncitizen voting is unacceptable. What is ironic is that she doesn't seem to care about the unforeseen number of Ohioans that will be disenfranchised should this unnecessary bill become law.

As this body well knows, Ohioans have been subjected to unfair unconstitutional district maps for several years. Those maps have brought us a disinterested and unresponsive supermajority in this statehouse. SB153 and HB233 will only exacerbate these issues. A NO vote on this bill is crucial in keeping Ohio from sliding further down a bleak path.