

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

My name is John Schmieding. I have lived and worked in Ohio since 1975. I appreciate the opportunity to testify. I am writing to express my opposition to SB 153. This bill is completely unnecessary and deeply harmful.

This bill makes the jobs of our local election officials much more difficult, without providing additional support. In my county, these dedicated public servants have big jobs and enormous responsibility. Making their jobs more burdensome only invites problems rather than solving them.

This bill attacks the citizen initiative process, making it more difficult and expensive for Ohio citizens to make our voices heard at the ballot box. The process of creating a citizen initiative is already difficult. I can see no reason to stifle our voices. It is un-democratic and un-American.

SB 153 makes it harder to register and cast your ballot. This impacts a broad array of Ohioans from rural voters who may struggle to get to a nearby BMV, to married women who have changed their names, to young people. Anyone with a mismatch of information at the BMV and on their voting records is at risk of having their vote thrown out.

What is the point of this measure? Are legislators afraid of their own constituencies?

Please represent us with integrity and courage.

Vote no on SB 153.

Sincerely,

John Schmieding