



May 26, 2024

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

My name is Kayla Griffin, and I am the Ohio State Director for All Voting is Local Action. Our organization advocates for policies and legislative priorities that expand voter access. AVL Action Ohio is also a member of the Ohio Voter Rights Coalition, a coalition of pro-voter organizations.

Let's cut to the chase, Senate Bill 153 (S.B. 153) weaponizes heinous lies about immigrants and large-scale voting to justify "solutions" to a problem rooted in disinformation that would harm eligible voters. Our elections have proven to yield no significant vulnerabilities, and this bill is a huge overhaul, when Ohio lawmakers have said there was no need for more big changes in election law. The reality is that our election officials need time to implement the recently passed election bills. This is why I am writing to express my strong opposition to S.B. 153.

This bill proposes significant changes to Ohio's election laws, including stringent voter registration requirements, which could disenfranchise eligible voters and undermine the democratic process in our state. These measures are reminiscent of the federal SAVE Act, which has been widely criticized across party lines and interests for also proposing to impose unnecessary barriers to voting.

S.B. 153 seeks to amend over 40 sections of the Ohio Revised Code, with a title – much like many elections bills in recent history – that is deceitful, because this is not just a proposed revision, but a complete overhaul. Most significantly, this bill, if implemented, would require verification of a voter's citizenship before they may register to vote. While ensuring that only eligible citizens participate in elections is crucial, the bill's approach would disenfranchise eligible voters due to stringent proof-of-citizenship mandates, preventing millions of eligible voters from registering. By implementing this requirement here, hundreds of thousands of eligible voters, across party lines and the rural and urban divide in this state, could be disenfranchised and kept from casting their ballots.¹

The bill also proposes changes to absentee voting procedures, including amendments to sections 3509.02 through 3509.09 of the Revised Code. These modifications could make it more difficult for voters to cast their ballots absentee, disproportionately affecting those who are

¹ According to the [Brennan Center](#), millions of eligible voters don't have the necessary documents required to prove citizenship

unable to vote in person due to various reasons such as disability, illness, or being out of town on Election Day. These changes could reduce voter participation by imposing additional hurdles on absentee voters.

S.B. 153 also includes provisions for voter roll maintenance, amending sections 3503.19 through 3503.21. While maintaining accurate voter rolls is important, the bill's language raises concerns about the potential for aggressive purging of voter rolls, which could result in eligible voters being removed without adequate notice.

I am always suspicious when an out-of-state lobbyist tries to influence Ohio lawmakers. FGA Action, a Florida-based non-profit that opposes Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), and SNAP benefits, and apparently accessible voting, is the only proponent for this bill. How is a Florida-based nonprofit flying all the way to Ohio to butt their nose in our election? Are you going to side with an out-of-state nonprofit over the residents of Ohio?

The provisions in Ohio's S.B. aim to implement stricter voting requirements that could suppress voter participation. As an Ohio resident committed to upholding the democratic process, I urge you all to reject S.B. 153. It is imperative that we protect the right to vote by ensuring that our election laws facilitate, rather than hinder, participation from all eligible citizen voter.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Kayla Griffin

All Voting is Local Action

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