

Interested Party Testimony on Senate Bill 153

Inconsistent Public Reporting if Registrations in Provisional Voting Status

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony as an interested party on the issue of transparency in voter registration reporting, particularly regarding the inconsistent public disclosure of voter records placed in provisional status.

Under SB153, the Secretary of State is required to regularly provide reports to each Board of Elections concerning voter registrations that do not match Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) or Social Security Administration (SSA) records. These voters are then placed in provisional voting status, and the Secretary of State is required to make this information publicly available on the SOS website, with limited exceptions for privacy and security.

However, for voters who are flagged as potential noncitizens, a different standard applies. While the SOS is required to report these individuals to the appropriate BOE and place them in provisional voting status, there is not a statutory requirement for making these reports publicly available on the SOS website - despite their direct impact on voter eligibility and participation.

This disparity weakens public confidence, and undermines the principle that all voter eligibility should be subject to the same level of transparency and accountability.

Transparency Is the Foundation of Trust

In a system built on transparency and public trust, consistent, accessible, and verifiable reporting is essential to safeguard against error, abuse and mistrust.

Information about a voter's provisional status is public information. If information about a voter's provisional status due to a mismatched ID or outdated address can be reported publicly, then similar standards should apply to reports involving potential noncitizenship.

Proposed Solution: Amend Reporting Requirements

An amendment to require the Secretary of State to publicly report on the SOS website, information about voters flagged as potential noncitizens—on the same standards as reports related to ID mismatches.

This amendment would ensure consistency and accountability in the handling of provisional voter status. It would also affirm Ohio's commitment to fair, nonpartisan election administration, and ensure that all voters are treated equally in the reporting and resolution of eligibility concerns.

In conclusion, I urge this Committee to support a straightforward amendment to ensure consistent public reporting of provisional voter statuses, regardless of the underlying reason. Transparency strengthens our electoral process and protects both voter confidence and election integrity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

