

5/5/2025

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

My name is Julie Muchiarone, and I am a constituent in Weston, Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am writing to express my opposition to SB 153. This massive bill is unnecessary and deeply harmful.

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.

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.

These bills will particularly jeopardize women voters, specifically married women who changed their last name. Not all women can track down birth certificates, marriage certificates, or other documents that this bill requires. My biggest concern is for women who are economically at risk, as they often do not have the money to fund the process to get these documents in order, among other logistics.

SB 153 overloads our local Boards of Elections with unfunded mandates and new requirements while giving them zero additional support. This 200+ page bill adds significant new burdens for Boards of Election, including tedious administrative tasks. At the same time, it eliminates drop boxes, which will require more election staff to be available during early vote season to accept and process ballots. It is very difficult to find election staff already and to ask more of our volunteers will deter people from filling those positions. At their core, these bills attack the citizen initiative process, making it more difficult and expensive for Ohio citizens to make our voices heard. All the while, they offer our local Board of Elections zero additional support to handle these changes, leaving them overloaded and underfunded.

There is too much on the line this primary election season, and I urge our state legislature not to rush such significant and dangerous bills. Instead, they should protect our right to vote.

The legislature should not rush such a significant and dangerous bill, especially during our primary election season when election officials have not even had time to weigh in. Please vote no on SB 153.

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

Sincerely,

Julie Muchiarone

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