

Interested Party Testimony on Senate Bill 153
Lack of Board of Elections Training in Verifying Proof of Citizenship

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

Thank you for considering my Interested Party testimony on Senate Bill 153.

As currently written, SB153 overlooks a critical component necessary to uphold the integrity of citizenship verification in Ohio elections: training. Under the bill, election officials are not required to receive training on how to properly review and authenticate the Documentary Proof of Citizenship (DPOC).

The lack of training creates a serious vulnerability in the verification process. Without proper instruction, election workers may unintentionally accept fraudulent documents or reject legitimate ones. Additionally, acceptance standards may differ from county to county, violating equal protection under the law. The increasing sophistication of document forgery tools, paired with the wide range of acceptable citizenship documents, makes this an area where uniform, standardized training is essential.

The Committee may believe that this issue can be addressed through a Secretary of State directive; however, without the codification of required training risks leaving the security and accuracy of Ohio's election systems to a future Secretary of State who may not prioritize proper verification of documentary proof of citizenship.

I respectfully request the Committee to update SB153 and require all Boards of Elections (BOEs) to receive comprehensive training on identifying and verifying the authenticity of DPOC. This training should be standardized statewide and provided along with the implementation of any DPOC-related procedures.

Implementing this amendment promotes consistency in document review across all counties, reduces the risk of human error or fraud in verifying citizenship status, supports fair treatment of voters by ensuring eligibility is determined based on informed and accurate assessments, and increases confidence in Ohio's election security and oversight procedures.

Verifying citizenship is a serious responsibility that must be carried out with accuracy and accountability. That begins by equipping election officials with the knowledge and tools to carry out that responsibility. I encourage the Committee to include this update in SB153.

Thank you again for your attention to this important issue and for your work to improve Ohio's election systems.

Respectfully submitted,


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