

Senate Bill 153 Interested Party Testimony

General Government Committee May 27, 2025

Facts Surrounding the Voter Registration Process not corrected in SB 153

Presented by Allison Nickolai- Miami County Ohio resident and registration process analyst.

Good afternoon, Chair Roegner and Members of the General Government Committee. I'm Allison Nickolai from Miami County, Ohio, and I'm here because our voter registration process is at risk with some of the measures in SB 153. Voter registration is meant to ensure only eligible Ohioans—those over 18, residents, and U.S. citizens—can participate in the Ohio Elections process, while maintaining accurate voter rolls as mandated by federal law to protect election integrity. But Ohio's system is already broken, riddled with gaps in training and accountability that you have heard or will hear testimony on that make it hard to keep those rolls accurate, validation consistent, and impossible to guarantee that Only US Citizen Votes count. Senate Bill 153 doesn't fix these issues—it makes some items worse, undermining both the federal mandate and public trust in our democracy. I've got four concerns, backed by data and analysis, and I'm asking you to amend this bill to deliver true election integrity without restricting lawful access to the ballot.

First, non-citizen credentials are surging and Non-Citizens are on the voter rolls.

In 2023, Ohio had 224,000 valid non-citizen driver's licenses and IDs on the Department of Public Safety (DPS) records. By 2024, that number hit 236,000, up about 1,000 a month. In 2025, it's skyrocketed to 304,000, a jump to 5,000 monthly. Worse, Social Security Number (SSN) verification failures cited on the HAVV weekly reports during registration rose from 49% in 2023 to 64% at the end of 2024. The problem is, that the voter registration has already been issued a voter ID number. That's a glaring sign our system's struggling to confirm voter eligibility, especially citizenship. SB 153 does nothing to address this—it lets these gaps grow, threatening the accuracy of our voter rolls and federal requirements. We need stronger verification to keep our elections secure and non citizens off the voter rolls. Any registration not validated for citizenship should be flagged to vote provisional until the record is fully validated.

Second, SB 153 is a step backward on registration ID policies.

Ohio's current rule—only accepting Ohio credentials for voter registration—sets a high standard for accuracy. SB 153's proposal to allow expired or out-of-state IDs is a clear regression. It violates 52 USC 21083 of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), which requires a valid driver's license or Social Security number and prohibits accepting registrations without them. Our county Boards of Elections can't verify out-of-state IDs—they don't have access to the databases needed. That's the Secretary of State's job. This change risks errors, delays, and ineligible voters slipping onto the rolls,

making an already flawed system weaker. If you cannot validate an Ohio driver's license for verification of citizenship, how on earth can we expect BOE's or the SoS to verify or validate an out-of-state license?

Third, unverified registrations- a HAVA "Black Hole".

When a registration lacks a valid driver's license or Social Security Number, it still gets a "unique voter ID" per HAVA and goes straight onto the rolls, with no provisional flag. I call this a "validation black hole" because no one can confirm eligibility without it, especially citizenship. This isn't a small problem—it directly undermines the integrity of our voter rolls and the eligibility of those electors. If thousands of unverified registrations pile up and are voting, it erodes trust in our elections by diluting the votes cast by eligible electors. SB 153 fails to close this gap, letting our broken system fester. We need strict rules to ensure every registration is vetted properly or is required to vote provisional and counted only after the record has been corrected and validated.

Fourth, voter roll discrepancies.

The Secretary of State's dashboard and county voter rolls don't line up, with over 75,000 unvalidated registrations statewide in some state of BMVSSA non match status. Some of these records are from 2021 and earlier. Federal law demands accurate rolls, but these mismatches raise serious doubts about who's eligible to vote. This isn't just a data glitch—it threatens secure election outcomes. SB 153 ignores this, failing to deliver the reform Ohio needs. We must reconcile each record on the voter rolls that have not been validated to restore confidence in our voter registration system.

In closing today, we must protect our access to the ballot from being exploited (preventable by validation) during the registration process. Voter registration should guarantee eligibility before access to a regular ballot. Surging non-citizen credentials—and the validation failure rate—show we're struggling to verify citizenship. Allowing out-of-state IDs, is a regression to current procedure. The "validation black hole" of unverifiable registrations further threaten our voter rolls' integrity. SB 153 doesn't fix the process that causes these flaws—it skirts the federal mandate for accurate voter rolls and erodes public trust in our elections. I urge you to amend SB 153 to strengthen voter roll validation by requiring a valid Ohio driver's license/ID, using SSN only if a driver's license doesn't exist, and give counties the database access they need for validation of registrations. I will provide more details supporting the facts presented here at your request and will gladly answer any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time, attention and focus on Ohio's elections.