

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Brenda Buchanan. I am a resident of Columbia Station in Lorain County and have been a registered and active voter since 1981. I was also a school board member, a petition circulator and a candidate for state office.

I am writing to express my grave concerns about SB 153 and its companion HB 233.

It is not lost on me the importance of the day on which I write my testimony - Memorial Day - when we honor those who gave their lives to protect our freedoms such as free speech and the right to vote. The language in these bills are written to hinder these freedoms.

The excuse given for these bills is voter fraud, which is rare in Ohio according to Attorney General Yost. The bills zeroes in on non-citizen voting, which is also rare. In 2024, out of 8 million registered voters, 597 were non-citizens and only 138 voted in the actual election. The numbers for past years are similar.

If the creators and sponsors of these bills believe that voter fraud runs rampant in Ohio, does that mean that they have held a supermajority in our legislature for so long due to election chicanery? I don't believe that just as I don't believe that our state government should be promoting the idea that voter fraud exists in our state when it does not.

In conclusion, these bills are nothing more than an attempt at voter and free speech suppression. Forcing people to vote provisionally, the removal of ballot drop off boxes, banning voter registration drives, and creating ridiculous criteria for petition circulators are all acts designed to make voting harder for everyone, especially senior citizens, the disabled and disenfranchised.

I ask you to consider my testimony and reject this bill under consideration the day after Memorial Day. A day when we celebrated the men and women who sacrificed all to protect the freedoms this bill seeks to strip away from Ohioans.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.