



June 16, 2025

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

My name is Greer Aeschbury, and I am the Ohio Senior Campaign Manager for All Voting is Local Action, an organization advocating for policies and legislative priorities that protect and expand voter access. We stand opposed to Senate Bill 4, as we were in 2022 when Secretary LaRose established the Election Integrity Division. Although the division and the proposed Election Integrity Unit are tasked with investigating voter suppression and ineligible individuals casting ballots, we have seen no evidence that the Election Integrity Unit takes the charge to investigate voter suppression seriously. Mass numbers of ineligible people casting ballots is a myth. As such, the Election Integrity Unit is an unnecessary waste of taxpayer dollars that does more to promote distrust of our system than anything.

SB 4 essentially codifies the same body established in 2022 in the Secretary of State's Office, the Election Integrity Division. Since its establishment, the public hasn't received much in the way of reporting on what the current iteration of the Election Integrity Division is up to. We know that SOS LaRose referred 597 individuals to the Attorney General for alleged voter fraud, but only six resulted in charges, including one who was dead! We also know that U.S. citizens have been accused of being noncitizen voters due to the continued focus on the myth of ineligible individuals casting ballots, including [one man in Cleveland who had been a citizen since 1975](#).

Not only is SB4 wasteful, but it allows citizens to weaponize this myth to fast-track attempts at voter suppression. In 2024, Ohio experienced an explosion in [mass challenges](#) by individual citizens. In one case, a single person challenged over 16,000 voter registrations in Wood County. The vast majority of these around the state were proven to be unfounded, but they used an incredible amount of staff time during a very busy presidential election year. Where was the Election Integrity Unit then? The volume of mass challenges itself should be viewed as a voter suppression tactic, and the unit could have been advising county Boards of Election, which were handling such issues for the first time.

Is the Election Integrity Division really the best use of our taxpayer dollars? County prosecutors already have the power to investigate and prosecute these cases, which they do. As we have said many times before, there is no evidence of an overwhelming problem of illegal voting. Six charges (not even convictions) out of 597 individuals is very poor evidence or justification of such a unit.

Sen. Gaverone said in her sponsor testimony and on many other occasions that even one case of voter fraud is too many. I agree with her that one case is a bad thing, but it is also true that one case of voter suppression is a perversion of our democracy. And unfortunately, we have much more evidence of barriers to the polls preventing people who are rightfully eligible. Laws such as SB 4 that feed the fear of myths and conspiracies weaken our democracy. Not only do they risk persecuting eligible voters, but they also send a message of fear that infects each one of us and makes voting feel risky, instead of being something we should be proud and excited to do. I would ask Sen. Gaverone: How many cases of voter suppression are enough for you?

To put it quite simply, by attempting to remedy the non-issue of ineligible voters attempting to cast ballots, we are keeping countless eligible voters from casting theirs.

When the Election Integrity Division was created in 2022, [we called it a waste of taxpayer dollars](#). That remains true. What evidence have we seen that this unit is worth the investment in staff and time? This bill includes annual reports of activity to the governor and the general assembly. These reports should be public and include the number of cases investigated or referred **and** how many actually result in convictions. Are these investigations contributing meaningfully in any positive way to voters' experience? What is the unit doing to remove barriers to the polls and fulfill its mission of investigating voter suppression?

While these questions go unanswered, we know that policies like strict photo ID, limiting drop boxes, and more have instead been leading to an increase in rejections of provisional ballots, which only adds to voter disenfranchisement and voter suppression. In 2024 alone, All Voting Is Local tracked 34,000 rejected provisional ballots. Those are 34,000 voters whose voices have been silenced at the ballot box.

In addition to duplicating the work of county prosecutors, this division appears to have been created without consulting the best experts on this issue: Ohio elections officials. These are the same officials who could use more money and staff time to process voter registration, count votes, and keep our elections running smoothly (the "gold standard," as SOS LaRose likes to say). Over the last several years, election officials have told us one of the newest problems they spend staff time on is combating suspicion and fear that anti-voter conspiracy theorists have planted. Establishing integrity divisions instills fear among voters and penalizes election officials or the public for genuine mistakes and does more harm than good in the pursuit of safeguarding democracy.

I urge the committee to vote no on SB 4 and stop investing in anti-voter conspiracies that are fueling distrust and damaging our democracy. Instead, send resources to those who are protecting and carrying out our elections: Ohio's tireless bipartisan election officials teams in every county of the state. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Greer Aeschbury