

Dear Chair Roegner, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and Senate General Government Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to SB153, which would require citizenship verification before an elector may vote – among many other things that would radically change voting in Ohio.

My primary, short term focus is to postpone the Oct 28, 2025 meeting to December 2025 to allow election officials to actively participate in the hearing once they have completed the November 2025 election.

In addition, I would like to voice my opposition to the very essence of the bill. According to the bill sponsor's aide, the intent of this bill is to "prevent voter fraud." In fact, voter fraud in our state is exceedingly rare, thanks to the non-partisan efforts of our dedicated election officials. Despite repeated concerns expressed about voter fraud, the results of the 2024 audit show that we do, indeed, have a sound election system with an extremely low incidence of voter fraud. (See <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2025/01/06/after-a-year-of-voter-fraud-concerns-ohios-election-audit-lands-north-of-99-again>)

Further, the bill implements unnecessary, onerous citizenship verification requirements aimed at preventing non-citizens from voting (which is not a real issue). It is already illegal for non-citizens to vote. In the current climate, where non-citizens risk deportation and worse, what non-citizen would even dare to vote?

From my understanding, SB 153, if allowed to pass, would devastate Ohio's election process in a variety of ways. I wonder why SB 153 is even on the table, when Ohio fairly recently passed a very tough law that forced election officials to make many changes in how voting is conducted. SB 153 represents a huge overhaul. We need to slow down and allow time for other recently passed election bills to be implemented and allow our election officials to actively participate in the process. Our boards of election are already under-resourced and overburdened. This bill would add bureaucratic and financial burdens without providing additional resources, which is unfair to Board of Elections staff.

I am also in opposition to the elimination of drop boxes. You are well aware they are safe and an effective way to gather people's votes. Their elimination is a direct effort to make voting more difficult so you can alienate populations you believe will vote against you.

Also, the bill would all but destroy the citizen initiative - one of the very few ways that citizens can directly petition the electorate, a right that has been long respected in Ohio. Not only would the citizen initiative process be undermined, but the bill goes so far as to threaten voters with potential prosecution. For what purpose? Is intimidation the goal? If so, how can such a bill possibly be good for a democratic republic "of, by and for the people"?

Or perhaps the goal of SB 153 (and its companion, HB 233) is to shrink the electorate. If so, what possible good would that serve?

Please do NOT allow SB 153 (or its companion bill in the House) to move forward.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Brevoort