

Hello. My name is Debbie Schmieding, and I live in Athens, OH. I appreciate this opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to SB 153. My efforts are based in the firm belief that the only way our democracy will be OK, is that every eligible voter has free access to the polls.

Unfortunately, our country is barreling toward the opposite - an erosion of democracy through multiple assaults on the right to vote with clear and accurate information; and without coercion. The State of Ohio legislature is an aggressive and complicit partner in this erosion.

SB 153 is brought forward - this has not gone unnoticed - in a very short time frame while Board of Election officials are focused on the job; the execution of a free and fair election in just a few days. I am so very impressed by the dedication of the Athens County BoE to the importance of every single vote, that I cannot imagine they or any other responsible BoE in the state would not have serious reservations.

The fact that you are running an end around local BoEs is telling. It suggests that you are way too concerned about the legitimacy of your latest attack on voters, to give it a fair and thorough hearing.

The minutiae of proposed requirements for voters (proof of citizenship; threats of prosecution for small errors; undermining of drop box and mail in options; over reliance on provisional voting) are all solutions in search of (non-existent) problems.

We are on the way down that famous slippery slope toward autocracy; I expect that the responsible and principled among you - who are in fact representing the citizens of Ohio - will push back on SB 153.

Ohio citizens have shown up against voter repression in many, many ways over the past few years. I hope that you have been paying attention. We are clear about our vision for an inclusive electorate; we are determined to protect the sanctity of our vote; we are furious; we are not going away!

Thank you.