

Testimony Opposing Senate Bill 153

Before the Ohio Senate General Government Committee

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

Submitted by Pierre Wolfe

Grandview Heights, Ohio

Chair Rulli, Vice Chair Reynolds, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding Senate Bill 153. My name is **Pierre Wolfe**, and I am an Ohio resident and voter from **Grandview heights**. I am writing today in **opposition** to SB 153 because it would create unnecessary barriers to voter registration, strain election administration, and threaten the voting rights of eligible Ohio citizens.

While I strongly support efforts to maintain secure and accurate elections, SB 153 does not advance that goal in a balanced or evidence-based way. Instead, it introduces new verification processes that are likely to disenfranchise lawful voters while failing to address a proven or widespread problem. I respectfully urge this committee to reject or substantially amend this bill.

1. SB 153 Risks Disenfranchising Eligible Ohio Voters

SB 153 would require documentary proof of citizenship to register or re-register to vote. Many eligible voters — particularly seniors, low-income residents, married women who have changed names, and those born outside the state — may not have ready access to the necessary documents.

Ohio already uses multiple safeguards to ensure that only eligible citizens are on the voter rolls. Adding new documentary requirements introduces bureaucratic obstacles that will inevitably block eligible citizens from registering, especially those with limited resources or mobility.

In a state that already boasts a 99.9% post-election audit accuracy rate, such sweeping new restrictions are not justified by any demonstrated risk.

2. The Bill Solves a Problem That Evidence Shows Does Not Exist

No credible evidence suggests that non-citizen voting is a significant or systemic issue in Ohio. According to testimony already submitted to this committee, only isolated cases — often due to clerical error rather than fraud — have ever been identified. Creating broad, punitive measures in

response to rare or hypothetical incidents undermines trust in elections rather than strengthening it.

Election integrity should be based on measurable problems and data, not on perception or speculation.

3. SB 153 Creates Unnecessary Administrative Complexity and Cost

The bill requires county boards of elections to repeatedly cross-check voter registration data against the BMV and federal databases such as SAVE (Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements). These databases were not designed for voter eligibility verification and are known to contain inaccuracies and outdated information.

Under SB 153, election officials would have to send repeated notices to flagged voters and cancel their registrations if they fail to respond — a process that increases workload, risk of error, and administrative cost. Mistakenly canceling a lawful voter’s registration not only erodes confidence in elections but also exposes the state to potential litigation.

4. The Burdens Will Fall Most Heavily on Marginalized Ohioans

The populations most affected by SB 153’s requirements will be those who already face disproportionate obstacles to participation — including naturalized citizens, elderly residents, people in rural areas, low-income voters, and those who lack access to transportation or documentation services.

Obtaining replacement birth certificates, passports, or naturalization records can be expensive and time-consuming. For many Ohioans, this bill effectively adds a new financial and logistical barrier to exercising a fundamental constitutional right.

Rather than broadening participation, SB 153 risks deepening existing disparities and diminishing the voice of communities already underrepresented in our democracy.

Conclusion

SB 153 is a **solution in search of a problem**. It would create new barriers for eligible voters, increase administrative burden and cost, and disproportionately harm already vulnerable populations — all without credible evidence that it would improve election security.

Ohio's election system is already among the most secure and well-administered in the nation. We should focus on policies that **expand access, modernize infrastructure, and support local election officials**, not on measures that could suppress legitimate votes.

For these reasons, I urge the General Government Committee to **oppose Senate Bill 153** in its current form.

Thank you for your time and for your service to the people of Ohio.

Respectfully submitted,
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