

Ohio Senate General Government Committee
Senate Bill 153

Abby Buckerfield, Lifelong Ohio Resident and Concerned Citizen

October 28, 2025

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

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit written testimony. My name is Abby Buckerfield. I am a lifelong Ohioan, a believer in civic participation, and a public school educator who has spent nearly three decades teaching Ohio's students with disabilities the importance of informed citizenship and advocating for fair, transparent government that listens to the people it serves. I am strongly opposed to Senate Bill 153.

SB 153 is not a bill about protecting elections. This is a bill that makes it harder for everyday Ohioans to participate in them. The proof-of-citizenship requirements, expanded provisional-ballot rules, and elimination of secure drop boxes will disproportionately harm people who already face barriers to voting. SB 153 creates additional barriers for Ohioans living with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with health or mobility challenges.

Ohio's elections are already secure, as confirmed by data from the Ohio Secretary of State's office:

- The official post-election audit of the November 2024 General Election showed a 99.99 percent accuracy rate statewide, with all 88 counties reporting 100 percent accuracy in the presidential race.
- Every ballot cast in Ohio includes a paper record—either a hand-marked paper ballot or a voter-verified paper audit trail—ensuring every vote can be traced and verified.
- By state law, Ohio's voting machines are never connected to the internet, eliminating the risk of online interference or hacking.
- County Boards of Elections must follow uniform, bipartisan security directives issued by the Secretary of State, covering cybersecurity, chain of custody, and post-election audits that are open to public review.

As a teacher of students with disabilities for nearly three decades, I have seen how much independence and confidence comes from civic participation. This participation starts with registering to vote for the first time, hoping that their voice matters. I also know what it means when access is taken away. My mother and a close neighbor both lost their lives to cancer, and several of my grandparents spent their final years in assisted living. These are Ohioans who relied on the ability to vote safely and conveniently, often by mail or drop box. The elimination of drop boxes would significantly impact Ohioans who may not be able to drive, stand in long lines, or travel to a county Board of Elections during business hours. SB 153 strips away these practical, secure options and replaces them with bureaucracy and red tape that will shut many of them out entirely.

SB 153 also limits how residents can receive help registering to vote, creating new barriers for community-based voter outreach and education. In my classroom and in the community, I have seen how important it is for first-time voters, people with disabilities, seniors, and young adults to have guidance when navigating registration requirements. Restricting who can assist or how that help can be offered will reduce participation, not fraud. It will especially harm those who most need support to exercise their rights.

This legislation also jeopardizes the rights of citizens to hold their government accountable. The increased restrictions and procedural hurdles this bill includes for signature collection would significantly curtail citizens' ability to place referendums or constitutional amendments on the ballot. These processes are vital to accountability and balance in state government. For more than twenty-six years, Ohio has operated under one-party control, with Republican supermajorities in both chambers and the Governor's office. This makes the citizen-led referendum and constitutional-amendment process one of the only remaining checks on power, yet SB 153 directly undermines that process.

If the goal of SB 153 is truly to strengthen election integrity, there are far better ways to achieve that goal. Ohio already has one of the most secure election systems in the nation, and we can continue improving it through better data integration, public education, and support for local Boards of Elections. Creating new barriers for voters or silencing citizen participation is not the solution.

I urge you to see this bill for what it is: an unnecessary overhaul that weakens the voices of the very people our democracy is meant to protect. Please reject SB 153 and instead work with local election officials, educators, and community advocates to ensure that every Ohioan—no matter their age, health, or circumstance—can participate freely and fully in our elections.

Thank you for taking the time to read this written testimony in opposition to this harmful legislation.

Respectfully submitted,
Abby Buckerfield
Delaware, Ohio