

I am dismayed by the provisions of SB 153, at least in its present form. I quite agree that our elections need to be secure, but it is both the sworn and public testimony of our Secretary of State, a proud member of the Republican Party, that our elections are already so and that election fraud is vanishingly rare in Ohio. Senate Bill 153 is a solution in search of a problem.

It puts unnecessary roadblocks in the path of eligible Ohio citizens who wish to register to vote, and to do so. The timelines for fulfilling the mandates are unrealistic for the real-life circumstances of many Ohioans. For example, my knee surgery this year would have made visits to either my Board of Elections or the Bureau of Motor Vehicles out of reach. The hassles of changing one's records after a name change due to marriage are so onerous already that when I remarried in my late 40's I bypassed them altogether and just kept my previous name – and now you are adding to the difficulties. The banning of drop boxes causes undue and unneeded hardship for voters who may have difficulty getting to their county's BOE to drop off their absentee ballot because of health, work schedule, or transportation issues.

A case of mismatched date, woefully common in this day and age, requires casting a provisional ballot, adding more work to already overburdened BOEs, stretched by squeezed funding and few volunteers.

In fact, extra provisional ballots are only one of the new, unfunded mandated requirements to be placed on BOEs: extra administrative tasks, increased recordkeeping, extra printing costs for provisional ballots.

As for the attacks on the citizen petition process for ballot initiatives: the onerous changes to Ohio's present process flied in the face of 200+ years of Ohio's history of ensuring that its citizens can initiate issues for voter consideration on their own volition. The egregious examples of outside groups trying to sway the petition process were identified by Ohio citizens long before the election on the issue took place, and Ohioans have had their say. The Ohio legislature has a recent history of trying to undermine Ohio voters by questionable, if not devious means – the most recent August Special Election comes to mind – and this attempt is similar. It clearly fails the smell test, and this provision must certainly be deleted.

In fact, I am hard pressed to find anything in SB 153 that is needed or wanted by Ohio voters. It should die in committee; if not that, it should most certajnly be heavily revised.