

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

My name is Lucy Anne McKosky and I am from Centerville. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. As a concerned Ohioan, I am writing to express my opposition to SB 153.

The right to vote is a sacred right of all American citizens. It should not be taken away simply because a person lacks documentation of a name change.

This bill would prevent thousands of eligible citizens from exercising their Constitutional right to vote by making the registration process significantly more cumbersome and requiring documentation that may be costly and time-consuming to procure. The procedures required by this bill would discriminate against citizens who move or change their name and young people registering for the first time by creating barriers not required of the millions of Ohioans currently on the voting rolls.

Obtaining documentation of citizenship is not a trivial matter. It can be particularly difficult for women who may have had several name changes due to marriage. I once tried to help an elderly friend obtain a State Identification Card, but it proved impossible, because all her documentation had been lost when she was moved to a nursing home. She needed marriage, divorce, and death records from multiple states and lacked the detailed information and funds necessary to get them. If this bill is passed, the same obstacles will affect many people who have voted for years, but find that they cannot update their voter registration when they move.

This bill is unnecessary. There is no evidence that non-citizens are voting in any significant numbers in Ohio. A thorough review by Secretary of State LaRose found only 130 potential non-citizens registered to vote in the state, out of more than 8 million registered voters. Of those, only a handful may actually have voted. The idea that undocumented immigrants are affecting election outcomes by voting is a myth for which no evidence has been shown. In reality, undocumented immigrants go to great lengths to avoid contact with government, so they are highly unlikely to attempt to register or vote. The procedures already in place clearly are adequate to safeguard our voting rolls.

Finally, this bill would impose a vast new workload on county Boards of Elections without providing any resources. Its provisions would require thousands of in-person visits to BOE offices to process new and updated registrations. They would force thousands more to vote by provisional ballots, which many would find impossible to cure. These are unnecessary burdens for our already overburdened Boards of Elections.

I urge you to reject this bill. It would unfairly disenfranchise thousands of legal voters. It would create unnecessary burdens for voters, and it would cost local taxpayers millions without producing any tangible benefit. The resources would be better spent on strengthening our election infrastructure.