

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

My name is Charlotte Owens, a voter, college instructor, and a petition carrier. I am strongly opposed to SB 153.

I urge this committee to vote no on SB 153, a “solution” in search of a problem. Voter fraud is not a problem: Secretary of State LaRose, in August 2024, said 138 noncitizens had voted (<https://apnews.com/article/ohio-voters-citizenship-referrals-42799a379bdda8bca7201d6c42f99c65>) and Attorney General Yost, in October 2024, announced 6 noncitizens had been indicted for voting (<https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/October-2024/Grand-Juries-Indict-6-for-Illegal-Voting>). These numbers are far too small to affect the results of elections, but SB 153 would make it much harder for thousands, or millions, to register and vote. Requiring proof of citizenship when registering to vote would require most people to go to the Board of Elections to register, have the proper documents (with EXACTLY the same name), and have the time and transportation to get there. Any or all of those could prove to be extremely difficult for young people, poor people, college students who don't have their birth certificates with them, people who work during the board of election hours, married women who changed their names, current voters who move and need to update their registration, etc. Didn't you hear from your constituents how much trouble some, especially married women, had getting a Real ID?

SB 153 also attacks the rights to citizen petitions, and seems meant to intimidate people carrying petitions, requiring them to give up their Fifth Amendment rights, and increasing harassment of them.

Please vote no on SB 153, a direct attack on eligible voters.