

Testimony Opposing Senate Bill 153
Before the Ohio Senate General Government Committee
Tuesday, October 28, 2025
Submitted by Janine Migden-Ostrander

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 Janine Migden-Ostrander, an Ohio resident, and I urge you not to pass this Bill.

Without Reason, SB 153 Makes Voting More Difficult for Many

When I read this legislation, the primary question that arises is: What is the purpose of this legislation? At best, it is an ill-conceived plan to correct perceived notions of election fraud. At worst, it is part of a Republican state and federal effort to disenfranchise Ohioans from the right to vote.

The purpose of legislation is to correct a situation that needs correcting and make things better for its citizens. This Bill does the opposite. Unless and until the proponents of this legislation can offer the public verifiable evidence that election fraud exists in this State, SB 153 has no business proceeding and should be stopped in its tracks. In fact, Ohio claims a 99.9% post-election audit accuracy rate. So ostensibly, to correct a .001% possibility of fraud (which could be split between democrat and republican votes) the supporters of this Bill would wreak havoc on a large swath of citizens by imposing onerous requirements to verify identity. This may require trying to locate documents, paying fees to get copies, missing work to handle some of the administrative aspects of registering to vote, etc. Kansas implemented proof of citizenship requirements, which resulted in 12% of eligible voters being unable to register. As a result, Kansas reversed course. Ohio should learn from Kansas' experience.

The Right of Citizens to Petition for Change Should Not be Tampered With

One of the great hallmarks of Ohio democracy is the ability of the people to petition for changes in the law. This is an important check on the legislature, when the majority of the people believe the legislature is being unresponsive to what the citizens believe is the best course of action. It is a way of ensuring that we have a government, "of the people, by the people, and for the people." Thus, the right to petition is a constitutional guardrail to protect the people

that should not be undermined or sabotaged through new, more restrictive bureaucratic requirements. SB 153 enacts onerous and unnecessary new requirements that tries to cure a problem that has not been identified. This too, is another attack on voters without foundation or reason and should not be permitted to become law.

More Unfunded Mandates Mean less Resources to Complete the Current Workload

Another serious problem with SB 153 is the stress it puts on the budgets and the workforce of county election officials. Consideration to the consequences of your actions if you pass this bill should be measured. By placing additional, onerous requirements, you are stretching resources without providing the funding and support this legislation would require. Board of Elections will be forced to absorb direct costs, increased requirements for hiring and training to perform the arduous recordkeeping, list maintenance, record keeping, provisional ballot processing, and the petition validation mandates in the bill.

Based on the foregoing, I urge you to reject SB 153 as unnecessary and not in the public interest.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

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