

October 27, 2025

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Gus Dahlberg. I am a domestic relations attorney with my own practice living in Columbus. I am strongly opposed to SB 153.

If enacted, SB 153 would make participating in civic life an unimaginable labyrinth for most citizens. My practice is focused on family law and domestic relations, which is a fancy way of saying I'm a divorce lawyer. The question of one's identity comes up quite a bit in such cases; my clients often are asked whether or not they'd want to change their names at the conclusion of such matters. Under SB 153, those who choose to do so would find themselves forever worried about whether that change had been recorded properly in each and every document and database they'd be required to show in order to vote.

Did they obtain a new license immediately after the divorce? A Social Security card?

Did they change their name on the utility bills associated with their home? With their bank? Did they need to move to a new address and didn't update the BMV?

Or what if they forgot that on their original license they'd listed a middle initial only? Does it match their birth certificate exactly?

I've seen a version of this problem in miniature already, with my own wife, who had problems after our marriage getting the TSA Precheck she'd paid for years before to allow her to board airplanes. She discovered that the name the Transportation Safety Administration used for her Precheck status was some conglomeration of her former name and her newly-married name – and at no point had she ever listed her name in that manner on any formal document. She'd been diligent about changing her name properly with every agency and office she could think of, and yet this one escaped her and created months of problems trying to get it changed.

And that's a single example of someone who was trying to do the right thing and had ample amounts of time to do so, buried in red tape. How many voters in Ohio will find themselves in a similar situation not of their own making? How many will not be so lucky, will not have that kind of time or energy to burrow through endless bureaucracy in order to secure a fundamental right guaranteed to them by the Constitution?

But you don't have to just take it from Gus Dahlberg. You can also listen to the testimony of Carl G. Dahlberg, as I have been known to the Social Security Administration my entire life. Or to C. Gustav Dahlberg, which is how my name is enrolled as a member of the bar at the United States Supreme Court. Or to Carl Gustav Dahlberg, the name which appears on my Ohio drivers' license. They're all me. I've been a registered and regular voter in this state for more than thirty years. Given these

varying names, should I now be concerned that suddenly I will be denied the right to continue to participate in my own democracy?

This bill, which would make voting a nearly unattainable privilege for many Ohioans, is fundamentally un-American. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote *NO* on SB 153. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

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