

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 Beth Helwig Carlson. I am a retired teacher who currently lives in Ashtabula County. I am strongly opposed to SB 153.

As an educator and the mother of three daughters I have always professed that voting was the single most important task we should undertake as citizens of the United States. As a young child I had heard stories passed down of my great grandmother attending rallies in Ohio to insure that women had the right to vote. I heard my mother tell first hand how excited her grandmother had been when she got to vote, just like her husband, Winfred. Now, through bills like SB 153, this fundamental right is being attacked again. Two of my daughters are of marrying age and are not taking the names of their husbands because they are well educated and are afraid by doing so that their right to vote will be taken away as indicated in the language of this bill, forcing them to vote provisionally. Since most women take their husband's name, I view this as a direct attack on women's right to vote. Like my great-grandmother did at the turn of the century, I am speaking out against silencing the votes of so many in our population. Turning people away or making them vote provisionally is just a fancy way of saying that not everyone's voice is important. SB 153 makes it harder for eligible Ohioans to vote and harder to collect petition signatures, while at the same time placing impossible bureaucratic and financial burdens on our county boards of elections. This is not the direction that we need to be moving. I believe in our democratic processes and that EVERY citizen's vote matters.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote *NO* on this dangerous bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.