

Loraine McCosker

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Dear Chair Kristina Roegner and esteemed committee members,

Please allow me to introduce myself. This email is from Loraine McCosker, Athens Ohio. I am a dedicated voter, mother, grandmother, retired Ohio University instructor, retired nurse. I value the democratic process deeply. I believe in the right of people to vote. I write in opposition to SB 153.

SB 153 is the latest attempt to rewrite Ohio's election laws. It's massive, unnecessary, and deeply harmful. The bill changes over 40 sections of Ohio law governing voting and elections and creates 3 entirely new sections – all to make 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. It is quite apparent that our state legislature is proceeding in a manner that makes registration, voting and petition writing and collection more difficult. In addition the Governance committee is hosting this hearing when the BOE is most busy, before an election.

Why I am opposed to SB 153:

SB 153 attacks the citizen petition process

- SB 153 attempts to intimidate civically active Ohioans by threatening petition committee members and circulators with politically motivated investigations.
- The bill enacts onerous/nit-picky new requirements that make it harder to successfully gather enough signatures for a ballot initiative.

SB 153 makes it harder to register and cast your ballot

- SB 153 creates an arduous process for verifying citizenship that would end up preventing tens of thousands of eligible Ohio voters from casting a ballot – especially married women, young people, and the less affluent.
- Experience shows, when states implement proof of citizenship requirements, eligible voters are impacted: Kansas tried it but reversed course after finding 12% of eligible voters were unable to register.

- Documentary proof of citizenship would likely require an in person visit to the BOE unless the BMV can verify your citizenship based on past records, interfering with current practice for voter registration drives and online voting.
- Voters will face prosecution if they fail to respond, within 14 days, to a confirmation notice sent in the mail.
- The bill requires anyone with mismatched data between the BOE and BMV (such as a new address or missing middle initial) to cast a provisional ballot. Ohio already over-relies on provisional ballots. In November 2024, 34,000 Ohioans had their provisional ballots thrown out. Under SB 153, the number of provisional ballots cast and rejected would skyrocket.

SB 153 overloads our local Boards of Elections with unfunded mandates and new requirements while giving them zero additional support

- The bill adds a mountain of tedious and unnecessary administrative tasks, without increasing funding.
- BOEs will be forced to take on direct costs, increased needs for hiring and training to perform the arduous recordkeeping, list maintenance, record keeping, provisional ballot process, and petition validation mandates in the bill.
- SB 153 bans drop boxes, which places a burden on voters while also increasing work for the boards of elections.

Please do not support SB 153.

Respectfully submitted,

Loraine McCosker

Athens, Ohio