

Opponent Testimony on SB 153  
Ariel Miller

Dear Chair Roegner, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and Members of the Senate General Government Committee,

Please stop SB 153 from progressing any farther. It will create needless burdens on voters - especially those in rural counties that constitute a key part of the majority party's base - and on the already-overwhelmed staff of county bureaus of election. This unnecessary law will suffocate Ohio's already shockingly low turn-out by impeding voters, county election workers, and civic volunteers. Based on data from the Census Bureau's Nov. 2024 Voting and Registration Survey, over 2 million registered Ohio voters have registered using methods that will be disrupted if SB 153 passes.

I write to you as an Ohio senior citizen devoted to civic participation. During my multi-decade career serving as an Episcopal journalist, running a diocesan nonprofit and serving as a board member for many grassroots nonprofits, I have loved volunteering on voter registration drives, collecting signatures on petitions, and working to inform citizens across Southern Ohio on how to vote legally and how to ensure that their vote counts.

I was truly inspired by the diligence and foresight of Gov. DeWine and Secretary of State LaRose in striving to make it safe for Ohioans to vote during the pandemic. After the 2020 election, Secretary LaRose repeatedly assured the public and the General Assembly that the election results were trustworthy and essentially free of fraud. One of the most vital services during the 2020 election was the availability of drop boxes.

Addressing a non-problem, SB 458 sharply reduced the number and use of drop boxes. If you pass it, SB 153 will ban them altogether. These changes disproportionately impede rural voters and anyone who works Monday to Friday. [Research by the Brennan Center for Justice](#) shows that hurdles to registration and voting may have an especially lasting impact in leading younger voters to give up, and stop turning out. The racial turnout gap has grown rapidly since *Shelby v. Holder*. See "[Impacts of Restrictive Voting Legislation since the 2020 Election](#)."

I have collected signatures on many petitions as a volunteer and am shocked by SB 153's new dangers to that means of citizen voice in an era when you are passing bills that defy the views of the majority of voters on multiple issues.

I have absolutely loved volunteering on voter registration drives and working with a gifted Episcopal graphic artist on social media posts on how to register online. We are both married women who took on our husband's last names, and am shocked at the barrier SB 153 creates for people whose married names no longer match their birth certificate. By requiring proof of citizenship when updating voter registration, and by requiring all forms of furnished ID to match, you will block a huge number of US citizens in Ohio from voting. The time, expense, and

stress millions of voters will need to undergo to register or update their registration will cause many to give up.

I was born in 1952. During my life I have been thrilled to see voter access steadily improve - until the past decade. I was able to vote for the first time in 1972 after the minimum age was reduced to 18 because Americans came to understand that it was unjust to draft men under 21 for a war when they were disenfranchised. President Reagan signed a 25-year extension of the Voting Rights Act in 1985. Since 2020, members of the Ohio General Assembly have accelerated the pace and number of attacks on voter participation.

Senators, do you want your legacy to be that of rolling back voting rights for the people you've sworn to serve? This bill, plus the cynical process the leadership of the General Assembly has followed in this fall's Congressional redistricting process, communicate to Ohioans that you want to silence their voice.

You have the power NOW to protect voter rights. Stopping this bill from advancing to the floor of the Senate is the way to do it.

Thank you for this opportunity to plead with you on this urgent issue.

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