

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

My name is Jessica Bell Semel and I am a life-long citizen of Ohio, having grown up in Shaker Heights (with a brief foray into upstate NY until I convinced my husband to come back here) and now living in Beachwood.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am writing to express my opposition to SB 153. This massive bill is unnecessary and deeply harmful, and actually a bit scary.

Just like the SAVE Act at the federal level which is EXTREMELY unpopular, SB 153 will make it extremely hard for married women like myself, who have changed their name, to prove our citizenship. In fact, I have daughters who are getting married and I worry about them changing their names to take the surnames of their husbands.

We know that Secretary of State, Frank LaRose, found NO cases of voter fraud in Ohio in the 2024 Presidential election. In the rest of the 2024 elections, there was a 99.9% accuracy rate.

In fact, LaRose says that Ohio is the "gold standard" for election integrity. So if there's no voter fraud, why would we need this law, this infringement on voter rights here in Ohio? It just doesn't make sense except to suppress voters and voting rights.

I learned that Kansas passed a similar proof-of-citizenship law a decade ago. From what I have read, it became one of the biggest political fiascos in their state history.

So why would we want the same thing for Ohio? Why would anyone want to go from "gold standard" to "political fiasco"? There is no good reason, truly, and I think you all know that.

Do what's right for Ohio. Please vote no on moving SB 153 forward.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jessica Bell Semel

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