

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

My name is Rebecca Weiss and I live in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. I am writing today in opposition to Senate Bill 153. I believe that this bill is unnecessary and harmful to Ohio citizens who are trying to exercise their constitutionally-guaranteed right to vote.

First of all, SB 153 attempts to intimidate civically active Ohioans by threatening petition committee members and circulators with politically motivated investigations.

Secondly, SB 153 makes it harder for citizens of Ohio to register and cast their ballot. It creates an unnecessary and lengthy process to verify citizenship which has been found to disproportionately affect married women who have changed their names, young people and low income citizens.

When Kansas implemented a similar bill it reversed course after finding that 12% of eligible voters were unable to register to vote.

Citizens would likely have to make in-person visits to their local Board of Elections to prove their citizenship. Not only is this difficult for working people to do but it also interferes with the practice for voter registration drives and online voting.

It also requires anyone with mismatched data to file a provisional ballot. In November of 2024, 34,000 Ohioans who filed provisional ballots had them thrown out. 34,000!! With the new requirements under SB 153 provisional ballots would skyrocket and more thrown out.

Is there a good reason for implementing this new citizen verification requirement? Secretary of State Frank LaRose found zero (0) cases of voter fraud in Ohio in the 2024 Presidential election. He said that Ohio is the “gold standard” for election integrity. So what is the point of introducing a bill that would harm our families, friends and neighbors?

I urge you to vote no on moving Senate Bill 153 out of committee.

Thank you for your time.

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Cleveland Heights, Ohio