



Opponent Testimony: Senate Bill 153
Senate General Government Committee
Jen Miller, League of Women Voters of Ohio
November 2, 2025

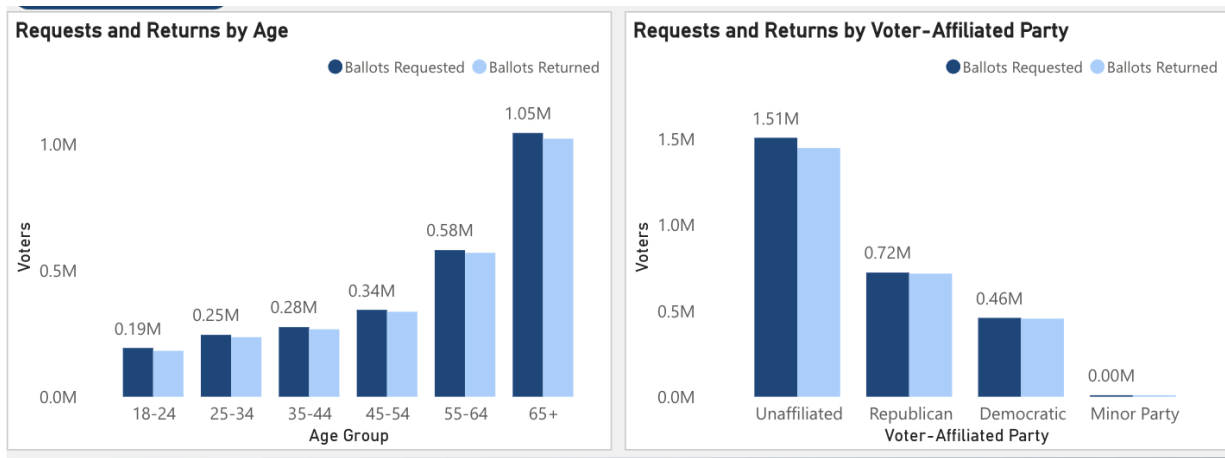
Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and esteemed committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Ohio’s dues-paying members, who live in every Ohio Senate district. We are fiercely nonpartisan. We never endorse candidates or parties. Our priority is and always will be voters. We seek to balance public policy goals of secure elections, fair election administration, and access for voters. That is why I stand here on my members’ behalf today in opposition to Senate Bill 293, which will do nothing to make elections more secure. It would simply erect more barriers to voting and punish hardworking Ohio taxpaying citizens for something completely outside their control: the speed of the U.S. Postal Service.

Ohioans have been voting absentee for many years. In fact, in our office, we have absentee ballots cast for Abraham Lincoln by Ohio soldiers serving in the Union Army during the Civil War. Secretary LaRose has some in his office as well. Today, during high turnout elections, about 1 in 5 Ohioans are voting absentee.

	2016	2018	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ballots Counted	5,607,641	4,496,834	5,974,121	1,965,507	4,201,368	3,964,530	5,851,387
Election Day	66.5%	69.6%	41.4%	79.8%	65.1%	76.1%	55.3%
Early in Person	11.9%	9.6%	22.5%	8.7%	13.1%	14.4%	26.3%
Absentee/Mail	21.5%	20.9%	35.9%	11.6%	21.9%	9.5%	18.4%

According to Secretary of State LaRose’s dashboard that tracks absentee and early in-person voting, more than 1 million senior citizens voted absentee during the 2024 General Election. Ohio’s unaffiliated and Republican voters also requested absentee ballots at higher rates than Democrats.



Voting absentee is also the most preferred or accessible method for many Ohioans to cast their ballots, including people with disabilities, active-duty military and their families, college students, and those who either travel for work or work during the business hours of the Board of Elections.

Shortening the window of return is imprudent, given that absentee voters must rely on the US mail service to receive their ballot, and many will use it to return their ballot. Massive operational changes designed to reduce costs to taxpayers have caused US mail delivery times to be much slower than in previous decades. Yet this body keeps shortening rather than lengthening the absentee voting schedule. Unfortunately, USPS is underfunded and understaffed, which means an uptick in mail use during elections or the holidays, as well as extreme weather, can negatively impact the speed at which ballots are received by election officials. Rural Ohioans would especially be harmed by this legislation, as they often experience slower mail service but also face longer drives to their county's only drop box or Early Vote Center.

As Ohio's voting trends continue to show a clear shift toward early and absentee voting, this committee should prioritize accessibility and efficiency. You can improve the efficiency, security, and accessibility of voting absentee by doing the following:

- Allowing online absentee requests, which is a commonsense improvement that eases the process for voters, while also reducing administrative overhead for elections officials.
- Providing county BOEs the authority and funding to have more than one drop box per county, which weigh as much as 600 pounds, are bolted to the ground, have 24-hour video surveillance, are emptied by bipartisan teams of elections workers, and are weather, fire, and bomb resistant. Utilizing drop boxes is not only more secure than using the postal service, but it is also more efficient and direct.

- Allowing Boards of Elections to set up bipartisan teams in public spaces like libraries, community centers, and firehouses to collect ballots on weekdays, evenings, and weekends. This change would be an incredible new source of accessibility for Ohio voters who cannot easily travel to the Board of Elections during business hours.
- Making up budget shortfalls that come from the loss of federal funding, as well as the many unfunded mandates that the Ohio General Assembly has adopted over the past few years.
- Pushing back on the fraud fear-mongering. Absentee voting maintains election integrity through a secure process with multiple safeguards. A comprehensive review by the Brennan Center for Justice found that the rate of voter fraud in mail voting ranges between 0.00004% and 0.0009%, making it an extremely secure method of voting¹.

Our elections system is the bedrock of our representative democracy, and so we ask this body not to rush changes to the system without deliberation, in which you hear the perspectives of diverse stakeholders. Abraham Lincoln once said, "Elections belong to the people," but that is only true if eligible Ohioans from all walks of life can freely and fairly participate. Please reject this legislation, which would harm access to the ballot and could limit voter participation among active-duty military, senior citizens, people with disabilities, students, rural Ohioans, low-income voters, communities of color, and other historically disenfranchised groups.

You can contact me to discuss this legislation or other democracy matters further at director@lwvohio.org or 614-469-1505.

Thank you.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio was formed in May 1920 out of Ohio's woman suffrage movement. The League is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

¹ [The False Narrative of Vote-by-Mail Fraud | Brennan Center for Justice](#)