

## Against Restricting the Mail-In Ballot Deadline (SB 293)

My primary concern regarding SB 293 is that it would **discard thousands of valid votes** due to factors outside a voter's control, fundamentally changing a system that already works effectively.

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### Disenfranchisement Due to Mail Delays

- **Valid Votes Discarded:** The bill would cause ballots that are properly filled out, **postmarked on time** (by the day before Election Day), and mailed by the legal deadline to be **rejected** simply because of postal delays.
- **Significant Impact:** For example, **more than 9,500 ballots** were received and counted during the current four-day post-Election Day acceptance window in the November 2024 election (Source: Ohio Absentee and Early Voting Dashboard).
- **Voters Penalized:** Voters would be penalized for the **speed of the mail**, a service issue they cannot control.

### Disproportionate Harm to Vulnerable Voters

Removing the post-Election Day acceptance window would **disproportionately impact** key groups who rely most heavily on mail-in voting:

- **Rural Voters:** Slower, less frequent mail routes and reduced postal service days would make it difficult for these ballots to arrive on time.
- **Seniors and Voters with Disabilities:** Voting by mail is often the most accessible, and sometimes the **only viable option**, for these Ohioans.
- **Voters without Transportation:** This includes students and Ohioans living in poverty who may not have reliable personal vehicles to deliver their ballots directly.

### The Current System Works

Ohio's existing law **already requires** mail-in ballots to be cast/postmarked by the day before Election Day.

- **Delivery Window, Not an Extension:** The existing **four-day acceptance period** is not an extension of the voting deadline; it is simply a **mail delivery window** designed to ensure eligible votes that were submitted on time are counted.
- **Public Trust:** Ohioans rely on this process. Of the over 2.6 million Ohioans who voted before Election Day last November, **803,253 (31%)** placed their **trust in the U.S. Postal Service** as their preferred method of returning their ballot (Source: Ohio Absentee and Early Voting Dashboard).

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