

Date: November 3, 2025

Position: OPPONENT

Chairman Roegner, Vice Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Senate General Government Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in strong opposition to Senate Bill 293, a dangerous and anti-democratic piece of legislation that threatens to disenfranchise thousands of eligible Ohio voters.

SENATE BILL 293 IS AN ASSAULT ON VOTING RIGHTS

Senate Bill 293 would eliminate the current four-day grace period for mail-in ballots, requiring all absentee ballots to be returned by 7:30 PM on Election Day. This represents a deliberate attempt to suppress legitimate votes and undermine the very foundation of our democratic system.

OHIO'S CURRENT SYSTEM WORKS

Ohio's existing mail-in ballot system is both secure and effective. Current law already requires all mail-in ballots to be postmarked by the day before Election Day. The four-day grace period is simply a mail delivery window that ensures legitimately cast ballots from eligible voters are counted—nothing more, nothing less.

The data speaks for itself: Of the more than 2.6 million Ohioans who voted before Election Day last November, 803,253 voters—31 percent—trusted the U.S. Postal Service as their preferred method of ballot return. These are not fraudulent votes or illegitimate ballots—these are your constituents exercising their fundamental right to vote.

Less than two years ago, the Ohio Legislature already reduced the acceptance window from 10 days to four days. Now, facing slower mail service and increased postal delays, this bill would eliminate any grace period entirely. This is not election reform—this is systematic voter suppression.

SB 293 TARGETS VULNERABLE OHIOANS

This legislation will disproportionately harm the very Ohioans who need our protection most:

Rural Ohio voters face slower mail routes and reduced postal service days, making timely ballot delivery increasingly difficult. These voters, many of whom live in conservative strongholds, will be silenced by a bill that claims to protect election integrity.

Ohio seniors and citizens with disabilities often rely on mail-in voting as their only accessible method of participation in our democracy. Senate Bill 293 would create insurmountable barriers for these voters, effectively denying them their constitutional right to vote.

Working families, students, and those without reliable transportation depend on mail-in voting to participate while managing work schedules, caregiving

responsibilities, or lack of access to polling locations. This bill would force these Ohioans to choose between their civic duty and their economic survival.

THE HYPOCRISY IS STUNNING

Remarkably, Senate Bill 293 maintains the four-day grace period for military and overseas voters while eliminating it for every other Ohioan. This creates a two-tiered voting system that arbitrarily privileges some voters over others. If a four-day window is necessary for military voters—and it absolutely is—then it is equally necessary for rural farmers, elderly residents, working parents, and every other Ohio citizen.

THIS IS ABOUT DEMOCRACY ITSELF

Make no mistake: Senate Bill 293 is part of a broader assault on representative government in Ohio. When elected officials systematically make it harder for citizens to vote, they are not protecting democracy—they are destroying it.

Throughout Ohio's proud history, we have expanded access to the ballot box, not restricted it. From the early township elections that built our communities to the constitutional conventions that shaped our state, Ohio has been a leader in democratic participation. Senate Bill 293 represents a betrayal of this legacy.

A CALL TO HISTORY

Ohio legislators have a choice to make. You can stand with the long tradition of Ohio leaders who expanded democratic participation and protected voting rights, or you can align yourselves with those who sought to restrict access to the ballot box for partisan advantage.

History will judge your decision. Your constituents are watching. And make no mistake—they will remember how you voted when their ballots are thrown out because of postal delays beyond their control.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE

Vote NO on Senate Bill 293. Protect Ohio voters. Preserve our democracy.

If you truly care about election integrity, focus on real solutions: improve postal service delivery, expand early voting hours, increase the number of ballot drop boxes, and ensure every eligible Ohioan can exercise their constitutional right to vote. Do not eliminate the grace period that protects legitimate ballots from postal delays. Do not disenfranchise rural voters, seniors, working families, and students. Do not create a system where your zip code or your access to transportation determines whether your voice is heard.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Reiss