



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB 293

Presented to

Ohio Senate General Government Committee

For November 5, 2025 Hearing

Beauregard William Patterson, *on behalf of*
Fair Elections Center

To Chair Kristina Roegner; Vice Chair Theresa Gavarone; Ranking Member Willis Blackshear, Jr.; and Committee Members William DeMora, Stephen Huffman, Bill Reineke, and Jane Timken:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of Fair Elections Center¹ regarding Senate Bill 293.

SB 293 reflects unwarranted changes that would eliminate the state's four-day post-election grace period for counting mail-in ballots, needlessly resulting in thousands of valid votes being discarded. This proposal will undermine public confidence in Ohio's elections by penalizing voters, who voted their ballots before Election Day, for mail delays that are beyond their control, and who have every expectation that their votes will count.

In recent elections, the United State Postal Service as well as state and local election officials have repeatedly warned that thousands of ballots will not arrive by Election Day, because USPS lacks the capacity to meet reasonable delivery expectations.² These

¹Fair Elections Center is a non-partisan, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to safeguarding the future of our democracy through innovative efforts focused on voting rights and civic engagement.

² CBS News. "State and Local Officials Warn Delays in Election-Related Mail Could Disenfranchise Voters." *CBS News*, September 2024. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/2024-election-mail-delivery-us-postal-service>; Politico. "Election Officials Urge Postal Service to Fix Delivery Problems with Mail-in Ballots." *Politico*, September 11,



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problems endure in 2025 and beyond as postal delays remain a persistent, nationwide problem.³

Eliminating Ohio's current four-day post-election grace period under Senate Bill 293 will certainly result in thousands of ballots lawfully cast under current law being rejected. For example, in the 2024 general election, more than **9,500 ballots** were received during the four-day post-election window.⁴ Each of these ballots was properly completed, postmarked on time, and mailed before the legal deadline by an eligible Ohio voter. Under SB 293, these 9,500 U.S. citizens who were eligible to vote in Ohio and voted their ballots before their election would have been disenfranchised solely due to postal delivery times outside of their own control.

Eliminating the four-day grace period will erode public confidence in Ohio's elections. Hundreds of thousands of Ohioans trust that their mail-in ballots will be counted. Of the more than 2.6 million Ohioans who voted before Election Day last November, 803,253 (31%) voters⁵ placed their trust in the US Postal Service as their preferred method of ballot return.⁶ Disqualifying the ballots of thousands of eligible voters who reasonably expect to rely on USPS in future elections would gravely undermine this public trust.

If SB 293 becomes law, it will disproportionately disenfranchise:

- **Rural voters**, who face longer and less frequent mail delivery routes;
- **Seniors and Ohioans with disabilities**, for whom voting by mail is often the only accessible option; and
- **Voters without reliable transportation**, including students and low-income Ohioans, who frequently depend on the mail to cast their ballots.

Ultimately, this change is an unnecessary one that will undermine both public confidence in and the integrity of Ohio elections. Ohio's existing system already safeguards election integrity. State law requires all absentee ballots to be **postmarked by the day before Election Day**. The current four-day acceptance period does not extend the voting period;

2024. <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/09/11/delivery-problems-mail-in-ballots-00178727>; USA TODAY.

"Postal Service Warns States: Some Absentee, Mail-in Ballots May Not Be Delivered in Time to Be Counted." *USA TODAY*, August 14,

2020. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/08/14/absentee-mail-ballots-may-not-delivered-time-counted/5587778002/>.

³ WLRN/NPR. "Your Ballot or Other Mail May Not Get Postmarked by USPS the Day It's Dropped Off." *WLRN*, October 23, 2025. <https://www.wlrn.org/national-politics/2025-10-23/your-ballot-or-other-mail-may-not-get-postmarked-by-usps-the-day-its-dropped-off>.

⁴ Ohio Secretary of State. *Ohio Absentee and Early Voting Dashboard*. Accessed November 3, 2025. <https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/ohio-absentee-data/>.

⁵ Ohio Secretary of State. *Ohio Absentee and Early Voting Dashboard*. Accessed November 3, 2025. <https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/ohio-absentee-data/>.

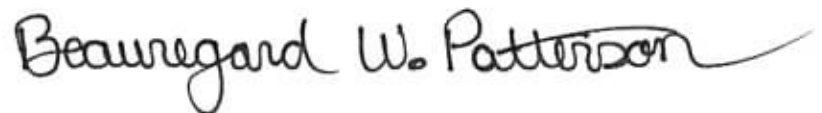
⁶ The need to rely on the post office is especially true when Ohioans only have the option of one drop box location per county, which may be difficult to get to.

it merely accounts for normal postal variation and ensures that all eligible and properly cast ballots are counted.

Because SB 293 would make it harder to vote for Ohio citizens, and undermine election trust and integrity, the proposal should be rejected to preserve a fair and secure voting system that counts every valid ballot.

SB 293 will silence thousands of lawful votes, including the constituents of this committee's membership, and will damage public confidence in Ohio elections. Therefore, on behalf of Fair Elections Center, I respectfully urge this committee to reject SB 293.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beauregard W. Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "n".

Beauregard William Patterson
Counsel
Fair Elections Center