

Chairman Kristina Roegner, Vice Chair Theresa Gavarone, Ranking Member Willis Blackshear, Jr., and esteemed members of the Senate General Government Committee. Thank you for allowing me to testify in writing today.

My name is M. Jennifer Martin Silva, a US citizen and registered voter in Cleveland, Ohio. I am strongly opposed to SB 293 which, if passed, would require all absentee voter's ballots to be delivered to the appropriate Board of Elections, in person or by mail by the close of the polls (7:30pm) on Election Day in order to be counted. One of the key foundations of our democracy is our right to vote. Without our right to vote we lose the most basic right to have a voice in making policy decisions.

The removal of the absentee ballot four day rule with SB 293 restricts the right to vote. The law currently stands that all absentee ballots must be postmarked by the day before the election and the four day rule allows time for the board of elections to receive the ballots. The US Postal Service has stated in the past around elections that they make mail-in ballots a priority to ensure they get to the election boards in a timely manner. To limit delivery to one day when mailed the day before an election is unrealistic. Keep in mind absentee ballots are not just being mailed within Ohio but from other areas of the US and overseas. Plus, our service members posted overseas have the right to know their vote will be given appropriate time to be received and counted. I get daily notices from USPS on what to expect in my mail, and often items, important items like bills, do not arrive when expected. Allowing ballots that are correctly mailed and postmarked no later than the day before the election to be received with the four day allowance is fair and realistic. To remove the four days is voter suppression.

The Ohio Secretary of State reported that there was a 99.9% rate of accuracy with voting last year so there is no concern for voter fraud.

I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this harmful bill.

Sincerely,

M. Jennifer Martin Silva  
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Cleveland, Ohio