



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF OHIO

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LWVO Proponent Testimony on SB 191
Ohio Senate Committee on Government Oversight and Reform
Jen Miller, Executive Director
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Chairman Coley, Vice Chair Huffman, Ranking Member Craig, and esteemed Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 191 on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Ohio.

The League of Women Voters of Ohio has long supported no-excuse absentee voting, which serves every voter, whether they vote absentee or not, by reducing lines on Election Day and improving overall access to the ballot.

Absentee voting continues to rise in popularity, especially among Ohio's growing elderly population. Other common absentee voters include those who travel for work, students away at college, people with disabilities, and those fighting severe illness.

While an eligible Ohioan can securely register to vote completely online, the absentee ballot process is more like a painfully slow tennis match. A voter requests the absentee application online, the county mails the application to the voter, the voter mails the application back, and then the county processes that request, informing the voter by mail as to whether the application was approved. If the application is denied, the voter will need to start the entire process over again, by mailing in a new application.

This process is unnecessarily complicated and confusing for the voter, who may legitimately think the action is complete when they request the application online. That is a fairly logical assumption, given that one can fully register to vote online. Additionally, the voter may be traveling, hospitalized, or otherwise physically unable to receive the rejection notice and resubmit a request in enough time to receive and return their ballot.

The process is unnecessarily inefficient and cumbersome for counties who pay for postage and staff time at various steps along the way. It is also prone to human error in which a county employee may accidentally misread a voter's handwriting on the paper form, leading to an unnecessary rejection.

Ohio can do better, and the League applauds Senator Gavarone for her leadership in this effort. Please support this common sense legislation to allow voters to request absentee ballots online.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony, and please feel free to contact me with any questions at director@lwvohio.org or 614-469-1505.

Jen Miller
Executive Director

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. The League has over 3000 members and 32 local Leagues across the Buckeye State.