

Ohio General Assembly
Chair of the Govt. Oversight Committee,
Rep. Shane Wilkin.

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, my name is T. Nicole Taylor, I am the first Vice President, Political Action and Criminal Justice Chair for the Cincinnati NAACP. I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide witness testimony on **HB 294**. I stand in opposition to HB 294 as introduced.

It is disappointing that after multiple successful and some record turnout elections this governing body is more invested in reducing access to voting then advancing it. I still believe it is offensive and unamerican for any elected legislator to create election laws that restrict and or complicate our civic duties as citizens of the United States. Our democracy is a sacred process that should never be manipulated to reduce voter's access. HB-294 is not only unnecessary there is no data provided showing it's need or how any of the proposed measure would reduce alleged fraud. Ohio's Republican Secretary of State, Frank LaRose, has reported only [77 cases of potential voter fraud](#) in 2022. The same state where in the [2020 election 5,974,121](#) had voted.

One can only surmise that the purpose of this illogical legislation is to appease election deniers who lost confidence in democracy when Trump did not regain the Presidency, despite many Republican candidates winning down the ticket in many states, including Ohio. It is troubling when our legislators lack the will to stand by undisputed facts and not give in to those who don't respect the peaceful transfer of power.

We are not fooled by the exploitation of these misinformed voters by lawmakers whose only intent is to create laws that ensure favorable outcomes to maintain positions of power. If you were really concerned about improving Ohio elections, you would begin by honoring the will of voters who supported fair districting maps. We want our elected officials to compete for their seat by upholding democracy that gives voters a choice not the politician choosing their voters. We want our elected officials to be accountable for their votes and come to local town halls to explain their positions and not arrogantly dismiss their rival(s) and the community because they legislate safely in a non-competitive district.

HB-294 accuses Ohio voters of being deceptive and cheaters who don't deserve decades of convenient access to voting, when in reality, those refusing to create fair district maps are the true deceivers because they need to CHEAT TO WIN.

Why prohibit government entities from mailing out ballot application and paying for postage? Did you think about the seniors and military personal who depends on that courtesy? What was once a welcomed convenience is now a new inconvenience that may shave away some votes.

Why cut off mail in ballot request from 3 to 7 days before election, and the return of absentee ballots from 10 to 7 days? Where is the data that show less days reduce fraud? I have not heard any accounts of any board of elections struggling to manage and count Ohio's votes. Reducing the deadline to request an absentee ballot is telling the brave soldiers abroad, and college students afar that YOU DON'T DESERVE THE EXTRA TIME TO RECEIVE YOUR BALLOT.

Eliminating the last day before election day which so happens to be one of the biggest voter turnout days in early voting is another Jim Crow ploy to reduce access to voting. Election officials have 10 days after the election to still receive votes so why are we eliminating any early voting days when we will still have to count votes weeks or days afterward?

HB-294 is a regressive bill looking for a problem. None of the proposed measures would do anything to prevent voter fraud but they will absolutely inconvenience Ohio voters, create longer lines to vote, and further increase voter apathy. That is not the American way and that is NOT DEMOCRACY.

I call on this committee to do better by Ohio and uphold democracy, by not moving forward with a bill that will negatively impact voters in Ohio.

Sincerely,

T. Nicole Taylor
First Vice President
Cincinnati NAACP