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Contact Information:

Office: 614-466-8258
Email: rep30@ohiohouse.gov

**Majority Floor Leader Bill Seitz
The Ohio House of Representatives**

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Sponsor Testimony for House Joint Resolution 4: To Amend the Ohio Constitution to prohibit non-citizens from voting in state and local elections

Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath, and members of the committee, it is my pleasure to present House Joint Resolution 4 to you today. This proposal will encourage voters to amend the Ohio Constitution to prohibit non-citizens from voting in any state or local Ohio election.

Cities like New York and San Francisco have already taken action to allow non-citizens to vote in local elections—these disastrous ideas from the coasts tend to have a way of filtering into the heartland. Let me share with you an incident from right here in Ohio that underscores the importance of this measure.

In the March 2020 primary, the Village of Yellow Springs had a charter amendment on the ballot declaring that residents of the villages who are non-US citizens may register to vote and vote on local issues and candidates. The issue passed.

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose subsequently directed that non-citizens in Yellow Springs may neither register to vote nor vote. That being said, a future secretary of state however may view this differently.

The best and most responsible course of action is to close this loophole and render this issue moot.

These notions are further amplified by the media in some cases. In November 2021, NBC published an article from a former federal and state prosecutor in New York in full support of non-citizen voting. What seemed incomprehensible only a few years ago may become a reality a few years hence unless we act.

I first became aware of this issue at a national conference a few years ago and realized what a major problem non-citizen voting could be. Most people probably don't know, in fact, that non-citizens could be voting, but while Ohio's current constitution guarantees the vote to all eligible citizens, it does NOT now preclude the legislature or local governments from extending the franchise to non-citizens. Since then, I have advocated for a constitutional amendment to

make sure that our elections are decided by the citizens of Ohio. That is why our proposal makes clear that only a citizen of this country may vote. That's something we can all agree on, and the vote on the House floor reflects broad support for this resolution. HJR 4 passed the House with a bipartisan vote of 68-28.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to House Joint Resolution 4. I would encourage your support and I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.

