

**Opponent Testimony of Deborah Cooper
Regarding House Bill 458
Presented to the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee
December 13, 2022**

Chair Gavarone, Vice Chair O'Brien, Ranking Member Maharath and Members of the Ohio Senate Local Government and Elections Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to this committee on House Bill 458.

My name is Deborah Cooper and I live in Worthington, OH. I oppose House Bill 458 because it is an attack on fundamental voting rights.

I believed Sec. LaRose when he stated, following the 2020 election, that Ohio "ran the most successful election we've ever had," and this despite the challenges of the pandemic. I have yet to see any good reasons put forth that would justify making voting more difficult for citizens in the future.

I oppose House Bill 458 because:

- It harms mail voters, especially military voters and other voters living overseas.
- There is no evidence to support the idea that ballots requested closest to the election are not received and returned; the vast majority are returned on time and counted. More time is needed to evaluate this data.
- HB 458 has been rushed through under a shroud of secrecy, with no opportunity in the House for people to speak against strict photo ID. HB 458 became an entirely new bill in the Senate; passing it could violate the constitutional requirement that bills get three readings on the floor of each chamber.
- HB 458 attacks students' rights, but students have had little time to push back, since the bill is being considered during finals week.
- Secretary of State LaRose only recently published official election results, and reports on provisional and absentee ballots have not yet been published. The legislature should NOT be rushing to pass anti-voter legislation before analysis can even be completed.
- Election officials do NOT support these bills, and the OAE0 president noted, in particular, that the deadline change for returning absentee ballots is "crazy."

Voting is a fundamental right in any working democracy. I would hope and trust that our legislators don't really want to curtail voting rights, particularly without evidence of fraud or any other apparent need to do so.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony.

Respectfully,

Deborah Cooper
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