



To: House Government Oversight Committee  
From: Kayla Griffin, Ohio State Director, All Voting is Local/Action  
Date: April 26, 2023  
Re: Opposing Testimony on S.B. 92 Pertaining to August Special Elections

Chair Peterson, Ranking Member Forhan, and members of the Government Oversight Committee:

My name is Kayla Griffin, and I am the Ohio State Director at All Voting is Local Action, an organization that exists to expose and dismantle threats to voter freedom in order to make voting safe, fair, and accessible, to build a democracy for us all. AVL Action Ohio is also a member of the Ohio Voter Rights Coalition, a coalition of pro-voter organizations. I am also the NAACP's Cleveland branch president. We are here in strong opposition to Senate Bill 92.

Last week I testified in opposition to HJR 1, during which I stated that the proposal is UNDEMOCRATIC, UNFAIR, UNPOPULAR, and UNNECESSARY! This stands true about this proposal as well.

During the lame duck session, this body passed HB 458, which, of all things, was given the title of: "Eliminate August Special Elections Except for US House Nominations." Governor DeWine signed it into effect on January 6th, on the two year anniversary of a day of infamy during which we saw insurrectionists attack our national seat of government in an attempt to destroy democracy. Two years to the day, we witnessed Governor DeWine compound upon that with the stroke of a pen by signing HB 458 and making Ohio the state with the strictest voter identification laws on the books. The insurrection has clearly continued on as lawmakers, including many in this very state, have continued their assault on democracy through anti-voter laws and actions.

We rise to testify to hold you accountable to the fact that those of you who support this bill are attempting to reverse yourselves for your own short term gain, a move that will cost taxpayers millions of dollars.

*"August special elections generate chronically low turnout because voters aren't expecting an election to occur. This is bad news for the civic health of our state. Interest groups often manipulatively put issues on the ballot in August because they know fewer Ohioans are paying attention. As a result, the side that wins is typically the one that has a vested interest in the*



*passage of the issue. Voters are just as capable of voting on these important issues during the standard primary and general elections.”*

Those are not the words of any organization, individual or group who stands opposed to HJR 1 or SB 93. Those words come directly from our Secretary of State Frank LaRose.

The manipulative interest groups are now using the state’s legislature to serve as their henchmen and our governor has already agreed to sign away Ohio’s democracy yet again.

Four former Ohio governors oppose a plan to raise the threshold for constitutional amendments and this frivolous spending for an August special election. Former Governor Kasich has said that “Ohio is stronger when we can all lend our voices and we all have an equal chance to participate in the work of our state’s democracy. I’ve experienced that firsthand having policies backed by myself and a majority of the legislature’s members overturned at the ballot box and it never occurred to me to try to limit Ohioans’ right to do that. It wouldn’t have been right then, and it isn’t right now.”

If you want to spend \$20 million dollars on elections, use it to buy new digital poll books or increase the budget for Boards of Elections so they can increase the pay for poll workers. Put money into voter education so that everyone knows how to vote under this new voter identification provision. Or maybe modernize the online ballot request portal so people don’t have to use hard copies for their ballot request forms.

These are just some of the examples of good government and better democracy! Any funding of an August special election is frivolous and is a mismanagement of government! I urge you to vote no on S.B. 92 - especially if you truly believe in a democracy for us *all*.