



**Ohio House Government Oversight Committee
Proponent Testimony, Senate Bill 71
June 13, 2023**

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 71 ("the DATA Act") on behalf of Secretary of State Frank LaRose.

My name is Mandi Grandjean and I have the honor of serving as the Senior Advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. Throughout Secretary LaRose's first term, I served as Director of Elections and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State. Since elected to this office, Secretary LaRose's mission has been to help Ohioans pursue the American Dream of building a business and participating in democracy. During the Secretary's first term, Ohio has set records for voter registration and participation with the historic 2020 election breaking every previous record, as Ohioans took advantage of our convenient and secure options for voting. We've been successful in our mission because we haven't stopped innovating and improving our operation. The DATA Act is a continuation of the momentum we have built in the Buckeye State, where this legislation would serve as a national model for election transparency.

The DATA Act stands for the Data Analysis Transparency Archive Act. At a high level, this legislation seeks to achieve four goals: (1) codify key election data definitions; (2) require that the retention of election data and non-federal election ballots is consistent with post-election canvass timelines; (3) require that the Secretary of State's Office disclose and archive election data; and (4) standardize election data so that it be accurately analyzed.

The DATA Act accomplishes these goals by codifying definitions for the "elector's voter registration date" and "voting history" definitions and requiring that "last activity date" and other key election data points be defined through the Chapter 119 rulemaking process. In our bottom-up election administration system, the 88 county boards of elections may have differing definitions for these terms. Although that may seem innocuous, this creates a challenge when comparing voting history between counties and may even give the impression that ballots are missing from the final canvass, or Ohio has same day registration.

The DATA Act will require the boards of elections to create a daily record of its voter registration database starting on Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act Friday (the 46th day before the election) and transmit that record to the Secretary of State's Office for publication and archiving.

In addition to establishing a standardized set of election term definitions, the DATA Act requires the Secretary of State to establish the Office of Data Analytics and Archives. The DATA Act will strengthen Ohio voters' sense of confidence in the integrity and security of our elections by requiring the Secretary of State's Office to "pull back the curtain" and transparently publish election data in an illustrative and easy to understand way to the public.

Further, please allow me to provide you with a real-world example of what can happen without the DATA Act becoming law:

Following the November 2018 General Election, Miami County inadvertently left out over 6,000 ballots from its official canvass. We learned about this almost immediately upon entering office in January 2019. Upon receiving this information, Secretary LaRose immediately placed the board under administrative oversight and launched an investigation, which involved conducting many interviews of all board members and board employees. Ultimately, it was determined that a machine was improperly shut down because of human error. Unfortunately, by the time the error was discovered, it was legally too late to amend the official results. While the uncounted ballots did not change the outcome of the election, this is unacceptable in Ohio's elections.

With the enactment of the DATA Act, the Miami County incident could have been avoided. The board of elections and the public would have immediately realized the number of voters who voted did not equal the number of ballots that were counted. By enacting the reforms outlined in the DATA Act, we can eliminate the risk of this happening again.

In addition to the improvements the DATA Act will create for Ohio's election data system, the county boards of elections will realize significant time and cost savings. Our hard-working boards of elections will save valuable time and money because election data that was previously gathered via daunting survey requests will be automatically reported from the boards of elections to the statewide voter registration database, which is publicly available on the Secretary of State's website.

To be clear, the DATA Act will not change the bottom-up nature of Ohio elections ecosystem. The DATA Act does not change how Ohio's elections are administered. The DATA Act is not an unfunded mandate.

We are grateful for Senator Gavarone's leadership on the DATA Act and are also appreciative of the America First Policy Institute, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Election Data and Science Lab, and the Bipartisan Policy Center, who were incredibly helpful through the stakeholder process.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on the DATA Act. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mandi Grandjean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Mandi Grandjean, Esq.

Senior Advisor to the Secretary and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
Secretary of State of Ohio