



Rep. Scott Wiggam  
77<sup>th</sup> Ohio House District

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 551.

In April 2023, I received a letter from a pastor of a church in Wooster, Ohio stating that seven individuals were registered in 2018, 2019 and 2020 using his church address as their residence. The pastor stated that these persons never lived at the church address and he did not even know who they were.

After contacting Wayne County BOE, I learned that these individuals registered to vote using a paper voter registration application form that was forwarded to the Wayne County Board of Elections. They all listed the College of Wooster Administration building as an additional "mailing address"; some failed to add a mailbox #, making it unlikely they would ever receive any notices mailed from the Boards of Elections. Furthermore, 3 of the seven did not fill in any information in the identification box even though the application clearly instructs the applicant to enter an Ohio driver license # or last 4 digits of SS# (box #10). All seven were on Wayne County's voter rolls and the BOE stated that with the letter from the Rev. that all seven registration would go into "confirmation status". We found that the three with no identification were already in confirmation status. However, why weren't these 3 individuals placed in provisional status to begin with?

According to SOS Directive 2023-24 (Election Official Manual) Section 4.01 Definitions: Voter Status Codes,  
**Inactive or "Active-Confirmation"**

The “inactive” or “active-confirmation” is assigned to a voter whenever the board has issued a confirmation notice to that voter, and the voter has not responded to the board of elections either to confirm the information on file with the board or to provide to the board of elections with updated information. ***Like a voter with an “active” status code, a voter with an “inactive” or “active-confirmation” voter status code is a fully qualified elector and eligible to engage in the activities of a registered voter (i.e., sign a petition, request an absentee ballot, etc.) and appears in the pollbook on Election Day... (Italics mine)***

This bill would, uniformly across the state, require the 3 electors to vote by provisional ballot and provide the missing information in order for their ballot to be counted.

HB 552 would place a registered elector in provisional status when one or more of the following issue are found:

1. Driver’s license # or the SS# does not match the name or is not found in the BMV or SS Administration data base.
2. Birthdate does not match the Driver’s license or SS# on the BMV or SS administration data bases.
3. The residential address does not match the driver license as found in the BMV data base.

HB552, The Voter Verification Act, improves this system by requiring electors with unverified identification to vote a provisional ballot and provide verified information for their provisional ballot to count.