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Bob Peterson State Representative

Sponsor Testimony H. B. 472

Committees

Chairman
Government Oversight

Finance, Agriculture,
Development, and Natural
Resources Subcommittee

Insurance

Public Utilities

Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas, and other members of the House Homeland Security Committee, I believe it is very appropriate that this bill was assigned to this committee, and I thank you for the opportunity to give sponsor testimony on House Bill 472. Representative Willis and I stand before you today to speak on a critical issue that is facing our state and nation: election security and integrity. I want to begin by emphasizing that Ohio and our local Boards of Elections operate the safest, most secure elections in the world. They are committed to assuring every vote is accurate and every election is fair and open to all registered voters. While I wholeheartedly believe that I also believe that just like your antivirus updates on your computer, Ohio must continue to review and update our procedures.

The Ohio Voter Registration Database is one area that sees a lot of avoidable mistakes in data entry. When typing a person's name in, everyone at one point has accidentally hit the wrong key or missed a hyphen to match their legal name as seen on their driver's license. The improvements in this legislation include creating ways to verify that the information being entered is accurate.

Key portions of the voter registration update include:

- Using reference lists of names and addresses to verify new and existing voter registration records,
- Issue weekly reports to counties identifying various errors in their voter registration databases,
- Require that a voters registration match the information on the applicant's driver's license or state ID card,

- Review voter registrations for electors who have moved if they are registered to vote or have applied for a driver's license in another state,
- Simplify the system for assigning unique record identifiers in the statewide voter registration database,
- Allow the use of a commercial service for monthly voter registration data analysis,

With these updates, we hope to reduce or eliminate the unavoidable data entry errors that happen because of human error. This allows a simple double check of the records that we rely on for our elections.

Another key portion of this legislation is the introduction of audits, done by the Auditor of State, annually of the statewide voter registration database and three randomly selected counties. While the Secretary of State continues their vital role of managing elections in coordination with the local Boards of Elections, the Auditor reviewing the database and procedures creates an additional level of security.

Key portions of the identity and citizenship verification update include:

- Increase the frequency of review for non-citizens and other ineligible voters,
- Provide counties with resources to verify identity and citizenship prior to registration and for absentee and provisional ballot screening,
- Expand voter registration instructions to assure citizenship and other eligibility requirements are reviewed, and
- Introduce safeguards and procedures at social services, BMV and registration agencies to ensure noncitizens are not misled into illegally registering to vote.

Cybersecurity is a highlight of this bill and is tackled in several ways, including:

- Using 3rd party reviewers to conduct cyber security assessments of those voting systems seeking certification,
- Adopting voting system certification standards based on the most recent National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and current federal guidelines,
- Require use of a digital blockchain ledger to log all voter registration system changes,
- Include cybersecurity experts on the board of voting system examiners,
- Establish standards and require certification of new voter registration systems, and
- Require voter registration systems to be physically located in Ohio in a facility under the board of elections control.

This is a comprehensive bill. Since its introduction, we have had conversations with the Secretary of State, the Auditor, and local boards of elections and their staff. Unlike many election bills, this is not a partisan bill. We believe everyone desires a safe, secure election and election process. We are committed to and expect to incorporate new ideas and resolve concerns through the committee process while still accomplishing our goal of insuring Ohio continues to be the leader in voter integrity and security.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony. We would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Peterson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bob Peterson
State Representative
Ohio's 91st House District