

Proponent Testimony for House Bill 472
House Homeland Security Committee
May 15, 2024

Shiloh Nelson

Chairman Ghanbari, Vice Chairman Plummer, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Homeland Security Committee. Thank you allowing me to provide testimony regarding House Bill 472 – the Ohio Votes Count Act.

HB472 will address the concerns I have regarding cyberattacks, interruptions and disruptions of our process to vote especially with the elections we have coming up in November. Our voting machines, pollbooks, voter registration systems and voting systems in general are vulnerable to meddling and criminal interference. Ohio law prohibits our voting machines from being connected to the internet but does not state anything about potential connections to telecommunications networks. E-pollbooks currently have the ability to be connected to the internet. Why are those not safeguarded? The Board of Voting Machine Examiners does recommend that voting machines are certified by the Secretary of State but not e-pollbooks, voter registration systems or other voting systems. Why is that? And lastly, if there is a catastrophic failure of the voting systems on election day, there is no contingency plan in place in the state of Ohio. That is simply unacceptable.

HB472 – the Ohio Votes Count Act resolves many of the issues I mentioned. It requires voting machines and e-pollbooks to not be connected to the internet or any telecommunications network. It renames the “Ohio Board of Voting Machine Examiners” to the “Ohio Board of Voting Systems Examiners” so that all parts of the voting systems, including the registration systems, are added to the formal scrutiny process. And finally, HB472 enables county commissioners and boards of elections to require hand counted paper ballots in the event of an unexpected shutdown of the electronic systems. We cannot allow corrupt and criminal interference of our elections. They must go on, as scheduled.

I appreciate all the efforts by Representative Peterson and Representative Willis. I politely encourage this committee to push and approve HB472. Ohioans deserve secure, guaranteed elections. Thank you.