

# EXHIBIT 13

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Re: Opposition to SB 238

Date: 12/04/2013

“Golden week” currently permits voters to make one trip to the polls, encourages voter participation and makes voting accessible to our senior citizens, single parents, college students, the poor and working poor who may not have the privilege of early voting during business hours.

Before deciding to eliminate Golden Week the public needs to know what other early voting cuts are planned. Will there be any weekend hours? Any Sunday hours? Any early voting hours after traditional business hours? We need to take a comprehensive look at early voting before deciding that Golden Week is not necessary.

**Fact:** In 2008, 1.9 million Ohioans cast their votes early in-person or by mail (<http://nova-ohio.org/reports.htm#democracy>)

**Fact:** Early voting saves money through precinct consolidation. 17% of consolidation occurred with 11,107 precincts in 2008. This number was reduced to 9,231 precincts in 2012.

The proposal to remove the Monday prior to election as an available time for EIP could be detrimental to voters. 1/3 of the votes in the last 3 days before Election Day were cast on that Monday. This accounted for 30,000 votes. The other issue with removing the Monday prior to election would be increased waiting times.

**Fact:** Out of 19 small sample counties (less than 100,000 votes) 16 had wait times of less than 1 hour during the last weekend of voting compared to 9 out of 10 large sample counties having wait times ranging from 1-4 hours. We do not need to become the laughing stock of the United States with TV cameras showing Ohioans waiting in long lines like third world countries!

EIP voting helps all persons to vote, but it provides a greater opportunity for the poor, the working poor, retired citizens, college students and single parents who work to exercise their right to vote. More days and times to vote help to reduce the number of missed days due to weather, sickness/disability, work obligations, etc.

Souls to the Polls has been popular with the faith community and there is no good reason to end Sunday voting unless the true motivation is voter suppression. Souls to the Polls is beneficial because it is an opportunity for the poor and the working poor to have access to voting, i.e. free rides to the polls, child care, a free meal, and an opportunity to vote with family and friends who understand and share in their struggles. Souls to the Polls was born out of slavery, Jim Crow and segregation. The church in our community has been the gathering place for safety, truth, and faith in action for oppressed people. We share a history like no other in this country. Our people have been enslaved, sold like sheep for two hundred years and have died in the struggle to give African American the rights to vote! We as a people have been and continue to be under educated and lack access to power and economic opportunity. The vote is the only collective power we share now as a group of oppressed people in

America. We as African American people still lead all negative indicators in this country. We have the highest level of unemployment. In the community where I pastor, 72% of the people live below the poverty level. Yes, right here in Columbus, Ohio. One million African American men are locked behind bars and working like slaves for the free market in this country. And in the urban core we have the poorest achieving schools for decades. Souls to the Polls is the hope of the oppressed African American - sharing faith in the election process and sharing the pain of our people who for hundreds of years were denied the right to be human in this country. The vote is our only chance to be equal with the rest of America and sadly, the only time to bring attention to our struggle. Prayerfully we can elect honorable men and woman who are not blinded to our struggle of over 400 years in this country. We helped to build this country with free and low wages. We have yet to receive our inheritance! It is amazing to me how people can say the struggle is over for African Americans just because we hold the highest office in the land. That is one man in one position. We as a race of people are poorer today than we were during the Great Depression. We are headed backwards and Souls to the Polls helps our people keep hope alive!

We should be encouraging as many people as possible to vote. Instead this bill is focused on making it harder for people to vote and have their votes counted.

Do not rush to pass this bill without public input to ensure that any changes would **HELP the public**, not suppress their vote. I'm asking that you don't pass any bills that suppress the vote!

Many of our citizens were confused with all the changes made before the last election – i.e. having to request absentee ballots and buying postage to mail in your vote. There was so much confusion about the absentee ballot request form that many members of my church were waiting on the ballot to come in the mail as it always had. We had to use grass root efforts to get the word out about weekend voting and absentee ballot request forms.

My plea to you is **LET'S NOT FORGET THE PEOPLE** in the process! The people are watching and hurting. All people are feeling the financial pain of this day and age, except the one percent of Americans who are making historical record profits and trying to suppress the vote all round this country; the one percent who can keep all profit for themselves and who do not care about the greater good of all Americans whose wages are declining at alarming rates.