

EXHIBIT 9

To: Senate State Government Oversight & Reform Committee
From: Andre Washington, State President A. Phillip Randolph Institute
Re: Written Testimony on SB 238
Date: November 19, 2013

Good Morning Chairman Burke and Members of the Senate State Government Oversight & Reform Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today regarding SB 238.

As President of the Ohio A. Phillip Randolph Institute (APRI) representing chapters from Akron, Stark County, Dayton, Columbus, Trumbull County, Cuyahoga County, Cincinnati, Franklin County, Toledo and Youngstown, I come before you today in opposition of SB 238. The goal of APRI is to achieve Political and Social Freedom and Economic Justice for everyone. Our founding leaders, A. Phillip Randolph and Bayard Rustin fought for civil and workers rights and were instrumental in accomplishing one of our country's greatest victories with the passage of the Voting Rights Act, which helped to broaden Black political participation. I am proud to also serve as a member of the Ohio Conference NAACP Executive Committee which is another organization committed to ensuring the political equality of rights of all persons.

APRI Chapters throughout the state of Ohio and the United States takes great pride in conducting voter registration campaigns to encourage voting and civic participation. There are so many people who have become discouraged in the leadership of our communities and feel as if their vote does not make a difference. Through education and interaction with these voters, we are helping voters understand the need to vote and utilize the Absentee Voting process, both In Person and Voting By Mail. There are also so many people in our state who greatly benefit from using the Golden Week to Register and Vote during the five days that SB 238 would eliminate.

African Americans throughout communities all across the state of Ohio and the entire country have fought long and hard for the right to vote and doing anything to take this right away or prevent African Americans from voting is unjust. More importantly, from the stand-point of our members taking away voting days with such minimal justification is voter suppression.

We urge members of this committee to not decrease the number of days voters are allowed to cast their ballots from the thirty fifth to twenty ninth day before the Election. This committee should instead be concerned and committed to increasing voter participation throughout our eighty eight counties. Please do not change or dismantle the Absentee Voting process in Ohio and number of days currently allowed to vote Absentee. Join our efforts to encourage all eligible voters to participate in the voting process and understand their right to vote in order to make a difference in our communities and the state of Ohio.

Thank you so much for allowing me to share my concerns with you today.