

December 15, 2022

Honorable Gov. Mike DeWine,

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to use your executive authority to veto Am. Sub. HB 458 (HB 458). The multitude of election law changes hastily added to HB 458 during the tail-end of lame duck session should be rejected as they will erect unjustified barriers to the ballot, harming all Ohioans, *especially seniors, hospitalized Ohioans, those in rural areas, and overseas active duty military*. These radical changes came in the wee hours of the morning, after lawmakers spent the last two days wheeling and dealing in back rooms instead of engaging in meaningful research, analysis or public debate.

Ohioans know our elections are secure, as evidenced by Secretary LaRose's post election audits, which demonstrate over a 99% accuracy rate, the miniscule number of potential fraud cases referred to the Attorney General's office, and the total absence of any claims of voter impersonation at our polling places and early voting locations.

You yourself wisely proffered that any changes made to Ohio's election administration need to be accompanied by evidence and facts. In the December 8, 2022 Gongwer Report, in reference to several elections bills, including HB 458, you are quoted as saying, "*Ohio does a 'very good job' at conducting elections under both Republican and Democrat secretaries of state. So I think the burden is on anybody who wants to make a change to describe why those changes need to be made.*"

We agree. The burden to demonstrate need lies solely on those intent on making these sweeping changes to Ohio's election law. That burden has not been met in any way, shape, or form. Those who support this prohibitive photo ID mandate have not brought forth any evidence to suggest, let alone confirm, a strict photo ID mandate will make Ohio's elections more secure. On the contrary, numerous voting rights advocates, elections administrators, and elected officials have rebuked these unsubstantiated assertions of rampant voter fraud, and testified that more than 10% of voting age Ohioans do not have a photo ID, and many lack the underlying documents needed to obtain a "free" ID. We urge you not to overlook the significant level of disenfranchisement that may result if HB 458 becomes law.

In addition to adding burdensome and unnecessary ID requirements, the bill also makes these drastic changes, among others:

- Substantially and unnecessarily cuts the allowable time for voted ballots to arrive at the Board of Elections, despite widespread mail delays. This will be particularly harmful for seniors and overseas active duty military and rural Ohioans.
- Unnecessarily limits secure drop boxes to one per county. Limited access to drop boxes is already causing traffic backups and delays at county boards.

Note that the Ohio Association of Elections Officials specifically noted its opposition to these two provisions.

All we ask is that you hold members of the General Assembly to the standard you set out on December 8, 2022. Absent the required facts and data to meet the burden of demonstrating why these radical changes in HB 458 are needed, we ask you to exercise your constitutional authority, and veto HB 458. Every Ohioan expects our elections to be as secure, accessible, and efficient as possible. HB 458 will do nothing but create confusion, sow discontent, and undermine the integrity of our future elections. For the sake of free and fair elections in the Buckeye State, please veto HB 458.

CC: Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose; Ohio Statehouse press corps.

Sincerely,

Jen Miller, League of Women Voters of Ohio  
Catherine Turcer, Common Cause Ohio  
Collin Marozzi, ACLU of Ohio

