

**TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF SB 153**

*Presented to*  
Senate General Government Committee

**For May 27, 2025 Hearing**

Beauregard William Patterson, *on behalf of*  
Fair Elections Center

To Chair Kristina Roegner; Vice Chair Theresa Gavarone; Ranking Member Willis Blackshear, Jr.; and Committee Members William DeMora, Stephen Huffman, Bill Reineke, and Jane Timken:

Thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony on behalf of Fair Elections Center regarding SB 153. The documentary proof of citizenship (DPOC) requirements proposed in SB 153 create an arduous process for verifying citizenship that will certainly prevent tens of thousands of eligible Ohioans from casting a ballot and will shut down most community-based voter registration efforts, which help voters at shopping centers, churches, campuses, and other public places where even people who have documents at home do not have them handy.

As an organization that has litigated against documentary proof of citizenship requirements because they make it harder for eligible people to vote, we have seen that hard-to-get and expensive document requirements make it harder for citizens to vote and ultimately create more problems than are solved.

For example, when Kansas and Arizona implemented similar documentary proof requirements, they blocked tens of thousands of eligible American citizens from registering. Before Kansas's documentary proof of citizenship policy was enjoined by the courts as an undue burden on the right to vote, the extensive litigation showed that 12% of eligible Kansas voters had been directly disenfranchised by its requirements.<sup>1</sup> In the words of Kansas Secretary of State Scott Schwab (Republican), who originally championed the implementation of DPOC in Kansas, "Kansas did that 10 years ago" and "it didn't work out so well."<sup>2</sup>

Recent studies show that around ten percent of voting-eligible citizens—millions of Americans—do not have documents to prove their citizenship.<sup>3</sup> If people cannot vote unless they show hard-to-get and expensive documents in order to register, it makes it harder for citizens to vote.<sup>4</sup> Those citizens are disproportionately likely to be young

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<sup>1</sup> Associated Press, *Kansas once required voters to prove citizenship. That didn't work out so well*, accessible at <https://apnews.com/article/kansas-noncitizen-voting-proof-of-citizenship-50d56a0b8d1f0fde15480aab3db67f4f>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> University of Maryland Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement, *Who Lacks ID in America Today? An Exploration of Voter ID Access, Barriers, and Knowledge*, accessible at <https://fairelectionscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Voter-ID-survey-Key-Results-June-2024-1.pdf>.

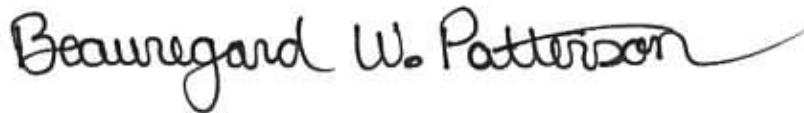
<sup>4</sup> Most people would have to go to an election office or mail a document weeks before they go to vote because voters in most states must register ahead of time. These paperwork requirements would shut down online voter registration and make mail registration much harder, because even when people have the documents they need, they often can't easily make and send in copies. Both privacy concerns and figuring out how to submit the documents make it less likely that people will finish registering.

people, elderly people, but they include Americans across all political parties and demographic groups. Married women, who have been subject to a name change are particularly impacted as well.

SB 153 will have a damaging impact on tens of thousands of eligible Ohio voters, including the constituents of this committee's membership. Therefore, on behalf of Fair Elections Center, I respectfully urge this committee to reconsider SB 153 and remove the proposed citizenship verification procedures.

Thank you for your consideration of the views of Fair Elections Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beauregard W. Patterson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Beauregard William Patterson