

RE: HB 294 Ohio Election Security and Modernization Act

Dear Chairman Wilkins, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Sweeney and members of the House Government Oversight Committee,

The Board of Medina County Commissioners wish to officially support the intentions and underlying premises of HB 294 Ohio Election Security and Modernization Act. We applaud Representative Sharon Ray and Majority Leader Bill Seitz for their leadership, insight and tenacity in offering this legislation that seeks to modernize Ohio's election laws, decrease the administrative burdens of bi-partisan local board of elections, as well as make it easier to vote and harder to cheat. In this time of biased rancor regarding our cherished election traditions that place the highest value on processes that are free, fair, and above approach, we greatly appreciate state legislators willing to take on this onerous task for the sake of future elections and our posterity.

While the bill is quite lengthy and provides for a great number of worthy changes to modernize current law and election procedures, specifically, we strongly support provisions of HB 294 that accomplish the following:

- Guarantees 216 Hours of Early Voting in Gubernatorial and Presidential General Election.
- Saturday and Sunday Early Voting Hours.
- A Dropbox available to available to voters in every county.
- Four weeks of Absentee Voting.
- 10 Day Window for Absentee Ballots to Arrive at a Local Board of Election
- A secure on-line voting registration system.
- A secure on-line absentee ballot request system.
- An Absentee request deadline that ensures all voters who request a ballot will receive one before election day.
- A rewording, but no substantive change, of the list of forms of ID that are acceptable for in-person absentee voting.
- Prohibits any voting machine, marking device, or piece of automatic tabulating equipment from being used in an election without undergoing successful testing.

In addition, the Board of County Commissioners are requesting that members of the Committee consider making further changes to the process of evaluating absentee ballots returned by mail that are inside the return envelope, but outside the ID envelope. We are requesting that the law clearly allow these be cured by a bi-partisan team directly overseen by the local Board of Elections. An absentee vote left uncounted because of a technical and minor, but curable issue, is an unreasonably silenced voice within our democratic process.

We thank you for your consideration of our comments on this important bill and urge the committee members to vote favorably on HB 294.

Sincerely,

