

Deidra Reese

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Opposition Testimony on HB 1

Chairman Peterson, Members of the Government Oversight Committee, My name is Deidra Reese, and I am the Voter Outreach Director for the Ohio Organizing Collaborative. We are a 501-3C organization that works in the community organizing College students, Day Care Service Providers, Parents and Teachers, returning Citizens and Faith Communities to engage in non-partisan civic activities to exercise their voting rights and build power.

I am expressing my opposition to House Bill 1 as introduced for the following reasons.

This bill as written is vague and includes language that can impose penalties and fines without clarity for foreign students, or their parents who are simply attempting to engage in civic activity. More time needs to be spent to clarify and differentiate between a student and a foreign government such as China or Russian who attempt to influence a presidential election for example.

This bill will have the effect of suppressing regular naturalized citizens from participating in ballot initiatives because of the vagueness of the language as written.

This bill is particularly disappointing because it deals with ballot measures and feels like it is yet another attempt by some members of the legislature to make an end run around the will of Ohio Voters who have consistently voted in large numbers to show you that you are NOT representing their will as it relates to ballot measures- if August of 2023 rings any bells and even the issues that have been on the ballot of late, November 2023.

Once again, it appears that you are aware that your bad ideas cannot withstand scrutiny so they are introduced, written vaguely, rushed through behind the guise of an inflammatory title with limited opportunity for public feedback and input (granting the AG additional powers, instituting fines and limiting political powers with one week of public input is very troubling).

Ohio Citizens are not buying what you are selling because you are not offering what they want or need. I would urge you to spend the time to get it right rather than rush through a bad bill that will harm the public trust even further by representing the will of some legislators as opposed to the citizens that legislators are supposed to be representing in the peoples' HOUSE. That is what you are to do after all.

House Bill 1 is not the answer,