



Proponent Testimony on HB 472
by former Ohio Secretary of State Hon. Ken Blackwell
House Homeland Security Committee
May 22, 2024

Chair Ghanbari, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the House Homeland Security Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of House Bill 472, the Ohio Votes Count Act, which strengthens cybersecurity of elections and provides key technological advancements to better serve Ohio voters.

As your Secretary of State from 1999–2007, I know firsthand the challenges of conducting an election in Ohio. Rapid technological advancements can create a situation in which state-owned technologies, machines, and processes are not as secure and modernized as they could be; provisions in this bill ultimately provide Ohio with a blueprint to ensure that the state keeps in step with procedural and technological advances in the interest of conducting secure elections and helping keep voter data safe.

This bill addresses several key issues:

- **Validation of voter registration data and audits of existing voter rolls.** This is a critical issue; I just commended Secretary LaRose on the audit he conducted that revealed non-citizens registered to vote. This provision carries on that good work.
- **Identity and citizenship verification.** Given the influx of illegal immigration all states have experienced under the Biden administration, this issue is very timely. It also helps protect against non-citizen voter registration via the Biden administration’s executive order 14019, which mandates that federal agencies participate in voter registration.
- **Strengthening cybersecurity and physical security standards for voting equipment.** Vulnerabilities in this area are of critical concern to the integrity of votes cast.
- **Voting system backups and election administration provisions.** Protecting voter data and making processes more secure always serves the interest of Ohio voters.

With this bill, confidence and trust in Ohio’s elections will continue to increase. Ohio already leads the way in many areas of election administration, and this would only continue that progress even further in the area of security and technology.

Sincerely,

Hon. J. Kenneth Blackwell
Chair, Center for Election Integrity
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