



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF OHIO

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Governor John Kasich
Riffe Building, 30th floor
77 S. High St.
Columbus, OH 43215

March 27, 2015

Dear Governor Kasich,

The League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWVO) urges you to line-item veto the portion of the transportation budget, House Bill 53 (HB 53), which requires an individual to change an out-of-state driver's license or vehicle registration to an Ohio driver's license or vehicle registration and license plates within thirty days of registering to vote in-state.

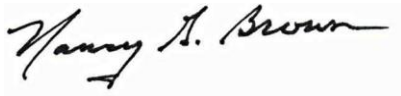
Regardless of whether this provision was intended to do so or not, it has the unfortunate -- and in all likelihood illegal -- consequence of burdening the right to vote.

- College students – According to the U.S. Supreme Court in Symm v. United States, 439 U.S. 1105 (1979), college students may lawfully choose whether to register and vote at their parent's home address or at their college address. Under HB 53, if an out-of-state college student chooses to vote in Ohio, they would be required to change their driver's license and vehicle registration to Ohio within 30 days if they plan to drive in-state. In addition to the costs of getting a new driver's license and vehicle registration (roughly \$70), such students may also face increased auto insurance costs if they are no longer able to stay on their parents' policy at their home address. Conditioning the right to vote on absorbing such costs comes dangerously close to a poll tax.
- Military – HB 53 also has the potential to impact the men and women who honorably serve in our military. Active duty military use their official "address of record" – usually the state in which they lived at the time of enlistment – for purposes of voting and paying taxes. However, active duty military may or may not choose to have their driver's license or vehicle registration at that address. In some cases, members of the military may prefer to have their license or registration in the state in which they are stationed. HB 53 takes away that choice.
- "Snow birds" – Many cold weather state residents, especially retirees, have one home in Ohio and a second home in a warmer state, such as Florida or Arizona. By law, of course, these snow birds as they are often called may only use one address for purposes of voting. However, for various personal reasons they may choose to have their vehicle's license plates in one state or the other. HB 53 would likely force snow birds to keep all vehicles registered in Ohio if they use Ohio as their primary address for voting purposes.

All of these potential negative consequences should have been researched and discussed during the legislative process before passage, but they were not. The voter registration rider was hastily added to HB 53 by the Senate just before passage, leaving no opportunity for it to be properly vetted and no time for public comment. There was not a single public hearing on this issue. Ohio citizens deserve better, especially when such legislation potentially impacts the fundamental right to vote.

For the foregoing reasons, we strongly urge you to use your line-item veto to remove this provision from the transportation budget.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy G. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Nancy G. Brown,
LWVO President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carrie L. Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a clear, legible font.

Carrie L. Davis,
LWVO Executive Director