

SB153 Falls Short in Enhancing Ohio's Critical Infrastructure Elections. It mirrors shortcomings of HB458, which was promoted as a strict voter ID law. Enacted in 2023, HB458 effectively closed the front door to ineligible voting by requiring a photo ID for in-person voting, but left the back door open for ineligible voting by allowing mail-in voting without a photo ID. As a result, over one million ballots were cast in 2024 without photo ID verification.

SB153 Closes the Front Door to Ineligible Voting by:	SB153 Leaves the Back Door Open to Ineligible Voting by:
1. Requiring proof of citizenship to vote	Failing to require proof of citizenship to register to vote.
2. Cross-checking <u>new</u> voters who register with a driver's license or state ID (DL/ID) against BMV records for citizenship verification, place registrations with unverified citizenship in provisional ballot status.	Failing to cross-check new voters who register using the last four digits of social security number (SSN4) with relevant federal databases for citizenship verification, creating unnecessary burdens on voters and election officials to manually process proof of citizenship
3. Require <u>existing DL/ID</u> voters who change name/address be cross-checked with BMV records to verify citizenship	Failing to cross-check all existing voters with relevant federal databases to verify citizenship
4. Requiring documentary proof of citizenship (DPOC) to vote if not verified as a citizen on the backend	Allowing expired and out-of-state DPOC to be accepted, and allowing copies of DPOC without requiring federal database verification
5. Requiring ' verified ' of proof of citizenship	Failing to define 'verified' proof of citizenship to require cross-checking against federal databases, and instead permitting Secretary of State verification of DPOC without disclosing the method, and visual inspections by Boards of Elections or poll workers as verification
6. Requiring identity and citizenship ' verification '	Failing to provide Boards of Elections access to federal databases enabled by President Trump's Executive Order 14248, which are necessary for adequate verification of voter registration information. Additionally, under federal law, Boards of Elections are required to verify provisional votes, yet lack the tools to do so
7. Cancelling voter registrations when a voter is identified as a noncitizen and they fail to self-cancel or provide documentary proof of citizenship	Requiring the Secretary of State to cancel noncitizen voter registrations on the statewide registration database instead of Boards of Elections who are legally required to manage their own voter rolls
8. Increasing the frequency and scope of the annual Noncitizen Review by checking DL/ID holders against BMV records and confirming apparent noncitizens through USCIS SAVE program	Failing to conduct a comprehensive Citizen Review of all voters, focusing only on those with valid DL/ID and excluding voters who registered using SSN4 or unverifiable IDs. Additionally, voters deemed citizens through visual inspection are never re-verified against federal databases, leaving potential gaps in citizenship verification
9. Clarifying voter registration form instructions to request DL/ID if one was issued, or SSN4 only if no valid DL/ID exists	Failing to enforce federal law requiring ID verification standards, which require a valid Ohio DL/ID for registration. SSN4 may only be used if no valid ID has been issued [52 U.S. Code § 21083]
10. Requiring new registrants to vote a regular ballot only if their DL/ID, SSN and related voter information match BMV/SSA records	Failing to ensure all existing voters meet this verification standard. Additionally, a Secretary of State directive clears an unverified ID flag after voting, permanently bypassing verification.
11. Placing voters who are unverified as eligible to vote in provisional ballot status	Allowing voters with multiple provisional ballot issues to cast a regular ballot upon resolution of one issue. This may be a technical error.
12. Requiring a verified birth date to vote a regular ballot	Allowing provisional ballots to count from voters with an invalid or placeholder birth dates, including January 1, 1800.
13. Requiring petition signers be registered voters at the time of signing	Allowing petition signatures to count from voters in provisional status without verifying their eligibility. Since votes do not count unless registration issues are resolved, shouldn't petition signatures be held to the same standard? Furthermore, a Secretary of State directive clears all registration deficiencies once a petition signature is accepted, permanently bypassing the verification process entirely

SB153 lacks the necessary safeguards to ensure that only eligible citizens vote in Ohio elections. Without meaningful amendments, SB153 will follow the same path as HB458 by closing the front door to ineligible voting, while leaving the back door open to permit ineligible persons to continue registering and voting in Ohio.