



Coalition on Homelessness
and Housing in Ohio
COHHIO

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Vague Rules for Sub HB 3 Further Disenfranchise Voters

Calling the vague and restrictive rules in Ohio's new election law a serious impediment to voter participation in Ohio, COHHIO is urging the Secretary of State to modify the draconian rules that seem intended to decrease voter registration in Ohio.

"The new rules can be interpreted as a means of intimidating, confusing and ultimately undermining the ability of groups and individuals to register new voters," said Jocelyn Travis, the newly-appointed director of OhioVOTES, COHHIO's nonpartisan voter outreach program.

"When a non-profit employee whose mission it is to empower people by registering them to vote is suddenly slapped with a fifth-degree felony because they're not a certified, affirmed registrar, something is terribly, terribly wrong," said Travis. "Under the new rules, even small and inadvertent violations will invalidate signatures and send people to court. In essence," said Travis, "the rules proposed by Secretary Blackwell will invalidate peoples' right to vote."

Of particular concern to COHHIO are the additional burdens placed on the traditionally disenfranchised populations, including those with low income, people of color, students, the elderly and persons with disabilities," Travis said. Now, someone whose job it is to register voters can no longer do so without "jumping through laborious and unnecessary hoops," Travis said.

Vague elements of the HB3 rules include:

- To whom is the voter registration form submitted?
- Is it permissible to mail instead of deliver in person the registration form?
- Is the registrar registration form available only online? What if no computer is available to the potential registrar?
- Shouldn't the Secretary of State spell out the fact that photo ID required at the polls must be federal or Ohio-issued?

Restrictive elements of the HB 3 rules include:

- Threat of criminal penalties for improper handling of voter registration materials
- Laborious training and registration processes for potential registrars.

"The Secretary of State's office should be engaging people in the voting process, not putting up countless roadblocks to turn them away," said Travis.

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