



www.lsc.ohio.gov

OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research
and Drafting

Legislative Budget
Office

Substitute Bill Comparative Synopsis

Sub. H.B. 294

134th General Assembly

House Government Oversight

Emily E. Wendel, Attorney

This table summarizes how the latest substitute version of the bill differs from the immediately preceding version. It addresses only the topics on which the two versions differ substantively. It does not list topics on which the two bills are substantively the same.

H.B. 294 (As Introduced)	Latest Version (I_134_3012)
Automated Voter Registration and Verification System	
Requires the Secretary of State to implement an Automated Voter Registration and Verification System through the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV). (<i>New R.C. 3503.11 and conforming changes in numerous other sections</i>)	No provision.
Voter roll maintenance procedures	
Adds to the types of voter activity that allow an elector to avoid having the elector's registration canceled after the elector is sent a confirmation notice, including conducting a transaction with the BMV	No provision.

H.B. 294 (As Introduced)	Latest Version (I_134_3012)
<p>or signing an election petition. <i>(R.C. 3501.01(W), 3501.38, 3503.19(C)(3), 3503.21, 3513.05, 3513.251, 3513.253, 3513.254, 3513.255, 3513.257, and 3513.259)</i></p> <p>Consolidates several provisions of law that describe the methods for registering to vote or updating a voter registration and how the boards of elections must process voter registrations and updates. <i>(R.C. 3503.16 and 3503.19, and conforming changes in R.C. 3509.02, 3509.04, 3509.08, and 3599.12)</i></p>	No provision.
Voter identification	
<p>Provides expanded definitions of “utility bill” and “bank statement” for when a voter uses one of those documents as a form of ID.</p> <p>Clarifies that electronic statements and bills are acceptable.</p> <p>Allows an in-person voter to show ID in the form of a utility bill or bank statement by showing the document on the voter’s personal electronic device, instead of showing a paper copy. <i>(R.C. 3501.01, 3505.18, and 3509.051)</i></p>	No provision.
<p>Clarifies that in every context where an elector currently may provide the elector’s driver’s license number as identification, the elector instead may provide the elector’s state ID card number. <i>(R.C. 3503.14, 3503.15, 3509.03, 3509.04, 3509.06, 3511.02, 3511.05, 3511.09)</i></p>	No provision.
<p>Makes a clarifying change to the law governing in-person voting on Election Day to specify that a voter must sign the pollbook, instead of requiring the voter to write the voter’s name and address. <i>(R.C. 3505.18)</i></p>	No provision.

H.B. 294 (As Introduced)	Latest Version (I_134_3012)
No provision.	<p>Requires every commercial driver's license, driver's license, and state ID card that is issued to a person who is not a U.S. citizen to indicate that the person is a noncitizen.</p> <p>Requires the BMV Registrar to issue a free commercial driver's license, driver's license, or state ID card to a person who becomes a U.S. citizen in-between renewals of the person's current license or ID card in order to remove the notation of noncitizenship. (R.C. 4506.11, 4507.13, 4507.233, 4507.51, and 4507.52)</p>
Curbside voting	
<p>Allows any in-person voter who travels to a polling place or to the office of the board of elections, but is physically unable to enter, to vote curbside (that is, in a vehicle or at the door).</p> <p>Allows the Secretary of State, during the period of a statewide emergency declared by the Governor, to prescribe procedures to allow other electors to vote curbside, as necessary to protect the public health and safety.</p> <p>Prohibits voters from voting curbside under any other circumstance.</p> <p>Codifies the curbside voting procedure currently found in Secretary of State directives.(R.C. 3501.29, 3505.18, and 3509.051)</p>	No provision.
Absent voting by mail	
No provision.	Eliminates a provision of current law that allows the Secretary of State to mail unsolicited applications for absent voter's ballots to individuals only for a general election and only if the General Assembly appropriates the funds for that particular mailing.

H.B. 294 (As Introduced)	Latest Version (I_134_3012)
No provision.	Instead prohibits the Secretary of State from mailing unsolicited applications for absent voter's ballots at any time, and retains the existing law that prohibits a board of elections or any other public office or public official or employee from doing so. <i>(R.C. 3501.05, 3509.03, and 3511.02 and repeal of R.C. 111.31)</i>
No provision.	Prohibits the Secretary of State or any other public office or public official or employee from prepaying the return postage on an application for absent voter's ballots or on the ballots themselves, and retains the existing law that prohibits a board of elections from doing so. <i>(R.C. 3509.03, 3509.05, and 3511.02)</i>
No provision.	Requires all applications for absent voter's ballots to be submitted on a form prescribed by the Secretary of State or on an appropriate federal form for requesting uniformed services and overseas absent voter's ballots. <i>(R.C. 3503.16, 3509.03, 3509.04, 3511.02, and 3511.04)</i>
Requires applications to cast absent voter's ballots by mail to be submitted to the board of elections by the close of business on the 10 th day before Election Day, instead of noon on the third day before Election Day as under existing law. <i>(R.C. 3503.16, 3509.03, 3509.031, 3511.02, 3511.04, and 3511.10)</i>	Changes that deadline to the close of business on the seventh day before Election Day. <i>(R.C. 3503.16, 3509.03, 3509.031, 3511.02, 3511.04, and 3511.10)</i>
Allows a board of elections, during the period beginning on the tenth day before Election Day and ending at the close of the polls on Election Day, to provide a maximum of three secure outdoor drop boxes on the premises of the office of the board for the return of absent voter's ballots.	Same as As Introduced, but: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allows drop boxes to be available only during the period beginning on the first day after the close of voter registration and ending at 7:30 p.m. on Election Day (the close of the polls). ▪ Requires any drop box to be open to receive ballots at all times during that period.

H.B. 294 (As Introduced)	Latest Version (I_134_3012)
<p>Requires any drop box to be monitored by video surveillance 24 hours a day during the time that ballots may be deposited in the drop box. <i>(R.C. 3509.05)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Specifies that the footage from the video surveillance is a public record, and requires the board to make it available for inspection immediately upon request. ▪ Allows only a bipartisan team of election officials to open a drop box. ▪ Requires a bipartisan team to collect the contents of each drop box and deliver them to the board for processing at least once each day and at 7:30 p.m. on Election Day. ▪ Specifies that if, as of 7:30 p.m. on Election Day, there are persons waiting in line to deposit ballots, they must be permitted to do so. ▪ Specifies that, if the board maintains multiple offices in the county, it may designate any of those offices for the return of absent voter's ballots, provided that the board must designate only one office for that purpose. <p><i>(R.C. 3509.05)</i></p>
<p>Emphasizes the continuing-law principle that absent voter's ballots that are personally returned to the board must be delivered by the elector or a listed relative, and not by any other person. <i>(R.C. 3509.05 and 3511.09(E))</i></p>	<p>Same as As Introduced, but also amends the existing law criminal prohibition regarding possessing another person's absent voter's ballot.</p> <p>Explicitly prohibits a person from returning the absent voter's ballot of another to the office of a board of elections, unless one of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The person is a relative who is authorized to do so under continuing law. ▪ The person is acting as an employee or contractor of the U.S. Postal Service or a private carrier. <p><i>(R.C. 3509.05, 3511.09(E), and 3599.21)</i></p>

H.B. 294 (As Introduced)	Latest Version (I_134_3012)
No provision.	<p>Requires absent voter’s ballots that are postmarked before Election Day to arrive at the board of elections by mail by the seventh day after Election Day, instead of the tenth day as required under existing law.</p> <p>Requires, similarly, that uniformed services and overseas absent voter’s ballots that are signed by the close of the polls on Election Day arrive at the board of elections by mail by the seventh day after Election Day, instead of the tenth day as required under existing law.</p> <p>Requires the boards of elections to begin counting late-arriving and cured absentee ballots and cured provisional ballots on the eighth day after Election Day, instead of the eleventh day as required under current law, because of the deadline changes described above. <i>(R.C. 3505.183, 3509.05, and 3511.11)</i></p>
No provision.	Requires a board of elections to process absent voter’s ballots before the close of the polls, instead of <i>allowing</i> them to do so, as under current law. <i>(R.C. 3509.06)</i>
Prohibits absent voter’s ballots from being counted if they are returned to the board with the ballots not inside the identification envelope. <i>(R.C. 3509.07 and 3511.11)</i>	<p>Eliminates a provision of current law that requires the board to place uniformed services and overseas absent voter’s ballots in the identification envelope if they are returned outside that envelope.</p> <p>Leaves the Revised Code silent on the matter of whether ballots that are returned not inside the identification envelope may be counted. <i>(R.C. 3511.11)</i></p>
In-person absent voting	
Requires in-person absent voting to be permitted for all voters beginning on the day after the close of voter registration before an election and ending on the Sunday before the election. <i>(R.C. 3509.01, 3509.03, 3509.051(A), 3511.02, and 3511.10)</i>	<p>Same as As Introduced, but adds a schedule of days and hours for in-person absent voting that must be used statewide.</p> <p>Codifies the current schedule prescribed by the Secretary of State, but eliminates the current six hours of voting on the day before</p>

H.B. 294 (As Introduced)	Latest Version (I_134_3012)
<p>Requires the office of a board of elections to meet the same accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities as polling places currently must meet. <i>(R.C. 3501.29)</i></p>	<p>Election Day (Monday) and redistributes them by requiring the boards instead to open earlier and close later Monday through Friday of the previous week. <i>(R.C. 3509.051)</i></p> <p>No provision.</p>
Ballot printing contracts	
<p>No provision.</p>	<p>Changes the process by which a board of elections must award any ballot printing contract worth more than \$25,000.</p> <p>Allows the board to award the contract to an out-of-state vendor.</p> <p>Requires the board to allow a request for proposals period of at least 15 days, and allows the board to post electronic notices in addition to newspaper and mailed notices.</p> <p>Reduces the amount of the bond that must be included with each proposal.</p> <p>Requires the Secretary of State to adopt rules establishing printing, mailing, and security standards for ballot printing vendors. <i>(R.C. 3505.13 and 3505.14)</i></p>
August special elections	
<p>No provision.</p>	<p>Eliminates local special elections held in August, with certain exceptions.</p> <p>Allows a political subdivision or school district that is in a state of fiscal emergency to hold an August special election.</p>

H.B. 294 (As Introduced)	Latest Version (I_134_3012)
	Permits certain local offices, questions, or issues to be placed on the ballot on the same day as an August special election held to nominate or elect a member of the U.S. House of Representatives (<i>R.C. 323.17, 3501.01(D), 3505.19(A), 3513.301, 3513.312, 3521.03, and 3521.031</i>)
Electronic pollbooks appropriation	
No provision.	<p>Appropriates \$7.5 million in FY 2023 from DPF Fund 5CV3 appropriation item 100668, Electronic Pollbooks, for the acquisition of electronic pollbooks and ancillary equipment for boards of elections.</p> <p>Reappropriates the unexpended, unencumbered portion remaining of the appropriation item 100668, Electronic Pollbooks, for the same purpose in FY 2024. (<i>Sections 5 and 6 of the bill</i>)</p>
Alternative forms of county government	
No provision.	Increases the number of electors required to sign a petition to propose an alternative form of county government, from 3% to 10% of the county's electors based on the most recent gubernatorial election. (<i>R.C. 302.03</i>)