

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

**State of Ohio *ex rel.* Ohio Democratic  
Party, *et al.*,**

**Relators,**

**v.**

**Frank LaRose, in his official capacity as Ohio  
Secretary of State,**

**Respondent.**

**Case No. 2024-1361**

Original Action in Mandamus Pursuant to  
Article IV, Section 2(B)(1)(b) of the Ohio  
Constitution

Expedited Election Case Pursuant to  
Supreme Court Rule of Practice 12.08

Peremptory and Alternative Writs  
Requested

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*Counsel for Respondent*

## **Affidavit of Donald J. McTigue**

Franklin County


/ss

State of Ohio


I, Donald J. McTigue, having been duly sworn and cautioned according to law, hereby state that I am over the age of eighteen years and am competent to testify as to the facts set forth below based on my personal knowledge and having personally examined all records referenced in this affidavit, and further state as follows:

1. I am an attorney at law licensed to practice in the State of Ohio, and I serve as legal counsel to Relators in this action.
2. Document 1 is a true and correct copy of Directive 2024-21.
3. Document 2 is a true and correct copy of the attestation form.
4. Document 3 is a true and correct copy of Directive 2024-24.
5. Document 4 is a true and correct copy of Advisory 2024-03.
6. Document 5 is a true and correct copy of the Affidavit of Elizabeth Walters, Chairwoman of the Ohio Democratic Party.
7. Document 6 is a true and correct copy of the Affidavit of Relator Norman Wernet.
8. Document 7 is a true and correct copy of the Affidavit of Relator Eric Duffy.
9. Document 8 is a true and correct copy of the Affidavit of Cassandra D'Aula.
10. Document 9 is a true and correct copy of a Cincinnati Public Radio news article by Howard Wilkinson entitled, "Analysis: Frank LaRose changes the rules for using ballot drop boxes ahead of November election." The article is available at <https://www.wvxu.org/politics/2024-09-06/analysis-frank-larose-ballot-drop-boxes-disabled-voters>.
11. Document 10 is a true and correct copy of a Cleveland.com news article by Jeremy Pelzer entitled, "Ohioans can only use election drop boxes to submit their own ballots, Secretary of State Frank LaRose orders." The article is available at <https://www.cleveland.com/news/2024/09/ohioans-can-only-use-election-drop-boxes-to-submit-their-own-ballots-secretary-of-state-frank-larose-orders.html>.
12. Document 11 is a true and correct copy of a Cleveland.com news article by Jake Zuckerman entitled, "No drop boxes for those submitting others' ballots, LaRose orders: Capitol Letter." The article is available at <https://www.cleveland.com/open/2024/09/no-drop-boxes-for-those-submitting-others-ballots-larose-orders-capitol-letter.html>.

13. Document 12 is a true and correct copy of an Ohio Capital Journal news article by Morgan Trau entitled, “Ohio Sec. of State LaRose proposes eliminating ballot drop boxes, changes rules ahead of election.” The article is available at <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2024/09/04/ohio-sec-of-state-larose-proposes-eliminating-ballot-drop-boxes-changing-rules-ahead-of-election/>.
14. Document 13 is a true and correct copy of a Sound of Ideas news article by Leigh Barr entitled, “Ohio Secretary of State orders limits on use of ballot drop boxes| Reporters Roundtable.” The article is available at <https://www.ideastream.org/show/sound-of-ideas/2024-09-06/ohio-secretary-of-state-orders-limits-on-use-of-ballot-drop-boxes-reporters-roundtable>.
15. Document 14 is a true and correct copy of a Statehouse News Bureau news article by Karen Kasler entitled, “Ohio Secretary of State orders limits on use of secure ballot drop boxes in fall’s election.” The article is available at <https://www.wvxu.org/2024-09-05/ohio-secretary-of-state-orders-limits-on-use-of-secure-ballot-drop-boxes-in-this-falls-election>.
16. Document 15 is a true and correct copy of a WCMH news article by Natalie Fahmy entitled, “Ohio Secretary of State changes ballot drop box rules, calls for their elimination.” The article is available at <https://www.nbc4i.com/news/your-local-election-hq/ohio-secretary-of-state-changes-ballot-drop-box-rules-calls-for-their-elimination/>.
17. Document 16 is a true and correct copy of a WXIX news article by Mary LeBus and Brady Williams entitled, “Security or restriction? LaRose’s new voter drop box measure sparks controversy.” The article is available at <https://www.fox19.com/2024/09/03/security-or-restriction-laroses-new-voter-drop-box-measure-sparks-controversy-amongst-dems/>.
18. Document 17 is a true and correct copy of a November 5, 2019 Cuyahoga County Board of Elections blog post entitled, “It’s Election Day!” The blog post is available at <https://www.cuyahogaelectionaudits.us/boeblog/category/voting-by-mail/>.
19. Document 18 is a true and correct copy of an August 29, 2024 letter from Secretary LaRose to Senate President Huffman and Speaker of the House Stephens.
20. Document 19 is a true and correct copy of Directive 2020-16.
21. Document 20 is a true and correct copy of Directive 2020-22.
22. The Index at the beginning of the Evidence describes each document and the page(s) on which it appears.

  
Donald J. McTigue

Sworn to before me this 2nd day of October, 2024.

  
Notary Public

My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_



Stacey N. Hauff, Attorney at Law  
Notary Public, State of Ohio  
My Commission Has No Expiration Date  
Sec 147.03 RC

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Dated: October 2, 2024

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Donald J. McTigue

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*Counsel for Relators*

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that the foregoing was sent via email this 2nd day of October 2024 to the following:

Jonathan D. Blanton, Jonathan.Blanton@OhioAGO.gov  
Heather L. Buchanan, Heather.Buchanan@OhioAGO.gov  
Michael A. Walton, Michael.Walton@OhioAGO.gov  
Stephen Tabatowski, Stephen.Tabatowski@OhioAGO.gov

*Counsel for Respondent*

/s/ Donald J. McTigue  
Donald J. McTigue (0022849)

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## **DIRECTIVE 2024-21**

August 31, 2024

To: All County Boards of Elections

Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: Enforcement of Absent Voter's Ballot Provisions and Compliance with State and Federal Laws

### **SUMMARY**

This directive sets forth procedures for enforcement of Ohio law regarding the return of an absent voter's ballot. I am acting under my statutory authority to compel the observance of election laws,<sup>1</sup> in this case Ohio's prohibition on "ballot harvesting," a process by which an individual attempts to collect and return absent voters' ballots of other persons without accountability. To ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws, this directive provides that a designated assistant delivering a ballot for another must sign an attestation that they comply with applicable law.

### **BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW**

Among other requirements, Ohio law generally prohibits a person from returning the absent voter's ballot of another to the office of a board of elections, unless "[t]he person is a relative who is authorized to do so under division (C)(1) of section 3509.05 of the Revised Code," or "[t]he person is, and is acting as, an employee or contractor of the United States postal service or a private carrier."<sup>2</sup> There is an important exception for disabled voters, and the persons assisting them, under a recent federal court decision applying Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act.<sup>3</sup> However, Ohio's prohibition on ballot harvesting is still required to be enforced with respect to voters who are not disabled.

It is important to ensure the integrity of each vote delivered on behalf of an absent voter. The security of the delivery of absentee ballots remains paramount, especially as it applies

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<sup>1</sup> See R.C. 3501.05.

<sup>2</sup> R.C. 3599.21(A)(9).

<sup>3</sup> See *League of Women Voters of Ohio, et al., v. Larose, et al.*, 1:23-cv-02414 (N.D. Ohio) (July 22, 2024).

to the use of unattended drop box receptacles. To ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws, this directive provides that an assistant delivering a ballot for another must sign an attestation that they comply with applicable state and federal law. As a practical matter, this means that only a voter's personal ballot may be returned via drop box.

Drop boxes are monitored by video surveillance and typically unstaffed. Therefore, this directive also requires boards to post a notification on each drop box indicating that voter-assisted ballots must be returned inside the board office, where the voter assistant will be asked to complete the attestation form.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

Each board of elections must share this directive with its legal counsel, the county prosecuting attorney. We understand that UOCAVA ballots must be mailed and regular absentee voting begins in less than 40 days.

### **I. USE OF SECURE ABSENTEE BALLOT DROP BOX**

#### **A. Attestation of Assistant Delivering a Ballot to a Board of Elections**

To ensure compliance with state and federal law, and to protect the security of absentee ballot delivery, the only individual who may use a drop box to return the ballot is the voter. All individuals who are delivering ballots for a family member or disabled voter may either mail the ballot to the county board of elections or return the ballot to a county board of elections official at the county board of elections office and complete an attestation at the board of elections.

Boards are required to provide the person assisting a voter with an attestation form which declares under penalty of election falsification:

- (1) That they are returning a ballot on behalf of a family member under R.C. 3509.05 (C)(1), and that they have been lawfully designated to assist another voter with the return of an absentee ballot;<sup>4</sup> or

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<sup>4</sup> See R.C. 3599.21(A)(9).

- (2) If the person is assisting a disabled voter, that they are complying with Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act and that they are not the voter's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union.<sup>5</sup>

The attached Form No. 12-P meets the requirements of this directive.

## **B. Drop Box Signage**

Each board of elections must post a weather resistant notice at or on a drop box specifying the security protocols for its use, including clear instructions on who is eligible to return such a ballot under this directive, as well as instructions for someone other than the voter attempting to return a ballot. The Secretary of State has issued the attached Drop Box Protocol Sign Template (the "Template") meeting the requirements of this directive, and will be providing a laminated copy of the Template to each county's board of elections. The signage required by this directive supersedes prior signage requirements.

A board of elections may make its own sign, provided that it uses substantially the same language found in the Template. If a board chooses to make its own sign and needs assistance, please contact the appropriate regional liaison at the Secretary of State's office.

## **II. REFERRAL OF POTENTIAL BALLOT HARVESTING**

Current security measures for drop boxes remain in place, including the 24/7 surveillance of drop boxes. Ongoing routine monitoring of drop boxes should continue, specifically monitoring for individuals who are dropping off more than one ballot. My office will vigorously investigate and refer for prosecution any individual engaged in ballot harvesting in violation of Ohio law. It is recommended that any allegation of ballot harvesting be reported to the Public Integrity Division – Election Integrity Unit of the Secretary of State at [EIU@OhioSoS.gov](mailto:EIU@OhioSoS.gov).

If you have any questions regarding this directive, please contact the Secretary of State's Elections Counsel at 614-728-8789.

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<sup>5</sup> See 52 U.S.C. §10508.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank LaRose". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Frank" and last name "LaRose" clearly distinguishable.

Frank LaRose  
Ohio Secretary of State

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Please select the checkbox next to your intended absentee ballot delivery method, fill out the required information, and deliver this with the ballot to a board of elections official in the board of elections office.



☐ **Family Member Absentee Ballot Delivery Attestation**

R.C. 3509.05, R.C. 3599.21(A)(9)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, *full name of assistor*, hereby attest that I

am returning a ballot for \_\_\_\_\_ *full name of voter*

a family member defined under R.C 3509.05 and that I am one of the following: spouse of the voter, the father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, brother, or sister of the whole or half blood, or the son, daughter, adopting parent, adopted child, stepparent, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece of the voter.

**Signature X** \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**WHOEVER COMMITS ELECTION FALSIFICATION IS GUILTY OF A FELONY OF THE FIFTH DEGREE.**



☐ **Disabled Voter Absentee Ballot Delivery Attestation**

VR A Section 208

I, \_\_\_\_\_, *full name of assistor*, hereby attest that I

am returning a ballot for \_\_\_\_\_ *full name of voter*,

who has designated me to assist them. The person I am assisting is a disabled voter, as defined by state or federal law, and I am not the voter's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union under Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act, 52 U.S.C. §10508.

**Signature X** \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **DIRECTIVE 2024-24**

September 17, 2024

To: All County Boards of Elections  
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: Administration, Implementation and Enforcement of R.C. 3599.21

## **SUMMARY**

This directive informs county boards of elections (the "BOEs") of the recent Memorandum Opinion and Order of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio (the "court") in *League of Women Voters of Ohio, et al. v. LaRose, et al.* (the "Order").<sup>1</sup> The court's Order is limited in scope but impacts administration, implementation and enforcement of Ohio's prohibition on ballot harvesting. Specifically, the State, its agents, and its employees have been enjoined from enforcing R.C. 3599.21(A)(9) or R.C. 3599.21(A)(10) against any disabled voter or against any individual who assists any disabled voter with the return of the disabled voter's absentee ballot.

## **BACKGROUND**

Through this litigation, the League of Women Voters and an individual plaintiff challenged certain provisions of House Bill 458, adopted by the General Assembly and signed into law by the governor in 2023. Specifically, the plaintiffs challenged statutory provisions which limit the type of persons legally eligible to assist a voter with the return of an absentee ballot to either a qualified relative or a mail carrier.<sup>2</sup> The court determined that this restriction violates Section 208 of the federal Voting Rights Act, which allows a disabled voter to be assisted by "a person of the voter's choice."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *League of Women Voters, et al. v. LaRose, et al.*, 1:23-cv-02414 (N.D. Ohio) Memorandum Opinion and Order.

<sup>2</sup> See R.C. 3599.21(A)(9).

<sup>3</sup> See 52 U.S.C. §10508.

To be clear, the court's Order is narrow and is limited in scope to disabled voters who wish to utilize someone other than a relative as defined by R.C. 3509.05 to assist them with the return of an absentee ballot. Specifically, the court enjoined the State and any of its agents or employees from administering, implementing, or enforcing of R.C. 3599.21(A)(9) and R.C. 3599.21(A)(10) "against any disabled voter or against any individual who assists any disabled voter."<sup>4</sup> Thus, a disabled voter may select any person to return their ballot, other than the voter's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union. See 52 U.S.C. §10508.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

Each board of elections must share this directive with its legal counsel, the county prosecuting attorney.

Consistent with the court's Order, a BOE may not administer, implement, or enforce R.C. 3599.21(A)(9) and R.C. 3599.21(A)(10) "against any disabled voter or against any individual who assists any disabled voter." Rather, a disabled voter may select any person to return their ballot, other than the voter's employer or agent of that employer or officer or agent of the voter's union.

Please see [Directive 2024-21](#) regarding procedures for the return of an absent voter's ballot.

If you have any questions regarding this directive, please contact the Secretary of State's Elections Counsel at 614-728-8789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose  
Ohio Secretary of State

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<sup>4</sup> See Opinion and Order at 38, 42.

## **ADVISORY 2024-03**

September 20, 2024

To: All County Board of Elections  
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: Employing Bipartisan Elections Officials to Receive Absentee Ballots Outside of  
the Boards of Elections Offices

### **BACKGROUND**

This advisory serves as a clarification to Directive 2024-21, Enforcement of Absent Voter's Ballot Provisions and Compliance with State and Federal Laws. Boards of elections are permitted, in-fact highly encouraged, to consider as a best practice, developing a streamlined, convenient drive-through ballot drop-off system during periods of high-volume turnout. For example, some boards have successfully managed high-volume ballot return periods in the past by stationing trained, bipartisan teams of elections officials outside of the office of the board of elections to receive absentee ballots from voters or those delivering an absentee ballot on behalf of another, in a drive-through format.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the requirements and best practices discussed below, if a board is interested in discussing how to successfully do this, please feel free to give us a call or connect with another board that has done so in the past.

### **EXPLANATION**

Boards of elections may consider, by a majority vote, implementing this traffic mitigation plan using permanent or temporary board employees who have undergone a criminal background check and received appropriate training (hereinafter, "board employees").

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<sup>1</sup> "Outside the office of the board of elections" means *immediately* outside the office of the board of elections, not remote locations miles from the office of the board. So, boards may station bipartisan teams of employees directly in front of the office of the board, behind the office of the board, right around the corner from the office of the board, or across the street from the office of the board, whichever of these options works best considering the vehicular traffic flow around the office of the board.

If the board members vote to utilize such a plan, the board must also determine and document how the following requirements will be met:

- (1) At least two board of elections employees, one Republican and one Democrat, must be paired together and trained to receive absentee ballots outside the board of elections office;
- (2) The board of elections must have sufficient additional staff at the board office to continue the successful operation of all other duties of the board of elections;
- (3) The board of elections must provide the bipartisan team with an appropriate container into which the delivered absentee ballots will be received and maintain the secure and bipartisan chain of custody of the ballots until they are deposited and stored under dual lock with other voted ballots inside the board of elections office;
- (4) The board of elections must engage with its law enforcement point of contact to develop a plan for appropriate traffic control while the drive-through system is being utilized;
- (5) The board of elections must post appropriate signage outside the board of elections office instructing voters on where to park or drive to return absentee ballots;
- (6) The board of elections must set a schedule of days and hours during which bipartisan teams of board employees will be stationed outside the office of a board of elections to receive absentee ballots and publicize that schedule on the board's website and social media. The staffed collection schedule may begin when early, in-person voting begins but must conclude at 7:30 p.m. on Election Day;<sup>2</sup>
- (7) The board must require the bipartisan team of board employees to require any person assisting another with the return of a ballot to complete [Form 12-P: Absentee Ballot Delivery Attestation](#) as required by Directive 2024-21; and
- (8) If there is a line for drive-through ballot drop off, the board of elections must mark or personally monitor<sup>3</sup> the last voter in line at 7:30 p.m. on Election Day to allow those who are in line at 7:30 p.m. to drop off their ballot.

Additionally, boards of elections should consider the following best practices when implementing a streamlined, bipartisan ballot drop-off plan:

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<sup>2</sup> If a court order is issued extending voting hours on election day, the Secretary of State's office will provide additional guidance.

<sup>3</sup> The bipartisan team must mark or personally monitor the last voter in line at 7:30 p.m. on Election Day in a manner similar to how precinct election officials mark or personally monitor lines at a polling location.

- Use of directional signage and traffic cones for traffic management. Boards of elections may coordinate with their county engineer or local road department to borrow such assets;
- Provide board staff with reflective vests for their safety and to designate them as official board staff;
- Provide sufficient quantities of “I voted” stickers, poll worker recruitment flyers, and the attached election security sheet to provide to voters who utilize the drive-through ballot drop off;
- Provide a pop-up canopy to shield elections officials from the elements; and
- Coordinate with local media to publicize designated dates and times for drive-through ballot drop off.

A reminder for board employees receiving absentee ballots that any allegation of ballot harvesting must be reported to the Public Integrity Division – Election Integrity Unit of the Secretary of State at [EIU@OhioSoS.gov](mailto:EIU@OhioSoS.gov). My office will vigorously investigate and refer for prosecution any individual engaged in ballot harvesting in violation of Ohio law.

If you have any questions concerning this Advisory, please contact the Secretary of State’s elections counsel at (614) 728-3789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose

Ohio Secretary of State

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO

State of Ohio *ex rel.* Citizens Not  
Politicians, *et al.*,

Relators,

v.

Ohio Ballot Board, *et al.*,

Respondents.

Case No. \_\_\_\_\_

Original Action in Mandamus Pursuant to  
Article XVI, Section 1 of the Ohio  
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Expedited Election Case  
Pursuant to Supreme Court Rule of  
Practice 12.08

Peremptory and Alternative Writs  
Requested

AFFIDAVIT OF ELIZABETH WALTERS ON BEHALF OF RELATOR OHIO  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY

I, Elizabeth Walters, having been duly sworn and cautioned according to law, hereby state that I am over the age of eighteen years and am competent to testify to the facts set forth below based on my personal knowledge, and further state as follows:

1. I am the Chairwoman of the Ohio Democratic Party (“ODP”).
2. Our offices are at 697 East Broad Street, Columbus, in the State of Ohio.
3. ODP is one of Ohio’s two legally recognized major political parties whose candidates for local, state, and federal office will stand for election at the November 5, 2024 general election.
4. We have thousands of members across the state who regularly support and vote for ODP candidates, and we count among our constituents several million Ohio voters who support Democratic candidates.
5. Hundreds of thousands of ODP’s members and constituents will cast their ballots via absentee ballot this year.
6. Every election, many ODP members and constituents rely on authorized family members—or, if they have disabilities, designated assistants—to return their ballots for them. Likewise, every election, many ODP members and constituents assist their family members and voters with disabilities by returning absentee ballots on their behalf.
7. Because this is a presidential election year, and there is a hotly-contested United States Senate race on the ballot as well, many ODP members and constituents will once again plan to have others aid their return of absentee ballots.

8. Our members and constituents and those who assist them often rely on drop boxes to return absentee ballots because of their schedules and because of the burdens associated with going into a board of elections office during the early voting period, which coincides with the absentee ballot return period.
9. These burdens include difficulties parking and waiting in line. In addition, many ODP members and constituents—as well as their family members and assistants—experience mail irregularities that deter them from using the postal service to return their own or others' absentee ballots.
10. ODP will be directly injured if Directive 2024-21 is not rescinded. Specifically, we will have to expend additional resources to educate our members and constituents about how to comply with Directive 2024-21.
11. ODP will also have to dedicate additional resources towards mitigating the impact of Directive 2024-21 on voter turnout—both because it eliminates a ballot return method that many of our members and constituents rely on and because it will cause long lines, deterring many voters and their family members and assistants.
12. This impact will be particularly acute because each county, no matter its population, maintains only a single site at which absentee ballots can be returned in person.
13. I am aware that some counties are working on plans to attempt to accommodate periods of high-volume turnout, but to my knowledge, there are no counties in Ohio that intend to have county officials manning an outdoor drop-off around-the-clock.
14. ODP's voters, volunteers, and organizers have elevated concerns and confusion about Directive 2024-21 to our leadership, including to me. The concerns and confusion have increased in the past week, as news about the Directive has spread and as voters begin to make their plans for absentee and early voting, which begin on October 8.



*Elizabeth Walters*

Elizabeth Walters  
Chairwoman, Ohio Democratic Party

State of Texas ;

County of Dallas ; ss.

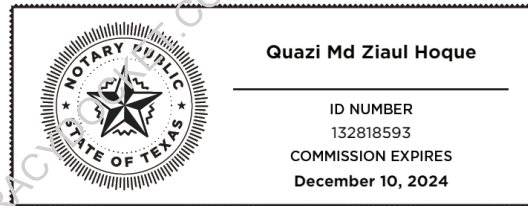
Sworn to before me this 27th day of September, 2024. by Elizabeth Walters

Quazi Md Ziaul Hoque

Printed Name, Notary Public

*Quazi Md Ziaul Hoque*  
Signature, Notary Public

My commission expires 12/10/2024



Electronically signed and notarized online using the Proof platform.

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO**

**State of Ohio *ex rel.* Ohio Democratic  
Party, *et al.*,**

**Relators,**

**v.**

**Frank LaRose, in his official capacity as Ohio  
Secretary of State,**

**Respondent.**

**Case No.** \_\_\_\_\_

Original Action in Mandamus Pursuant to  
Article XVI, Section 1 of the Ohio  
Constitution

Expedited Election Case  
Pursuant to Supreme Court Rule of  
Practice 12.08

Peremptory and Alternative Writs  
Requested

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**AFFIDAVIT OF RELATOR NORMAN WERNET**

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I, Norman Wernet, having been duly sworn and cautioned according to law, hereby state that I am over the age of eighteen years and am competent to testify to the facts set forth below based on my personal knowledge, and further state as follows:

1. I reside at 2585 Bexley Park Road, Bexley, in the State of Ohio.
2. I am qualified to vote in the State of Ohio, and I am registered to vote in Franklin County, Ohio.
3. Both my wife and I intend to cast an absentee ballot in this year's general election. I plan to assist my wife, who has early-stage dementia, by dropping off her ballot at the drop box in Franklin County along with my own.
4. I plan to vote by drop box in 2024 because of a recent experience I had with mail theft. It is very important to me to have my vote counted and I do not feel comfortable risking my ballot not being received if my mail is stolen again. Voting by drop box provides me with the assurance that my ballot will arrive directly at the board of elections and will be counted.
5. I am also a senior citizen and would have difficulty returning our ballots if Directive 2024-21 is not rescinded, as I would be forced to park my car, potentially walk up to several blocks, and wait in line for an uncertain length of time to complete an attestation form before walking back to my car—all of which would be taxing on my time and my health.

*Norman Wernet*

Norman Wernet

State of Texas;

County of Harris; ss.

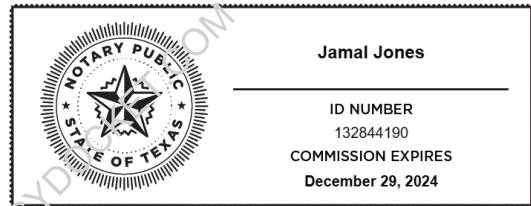
Sworn to before me this 27th day of September, 2024.

Jamal Jones

Printed Name, Notary Public

*Jamal Jones*

Signature, Notary Public



My commission expires 12/29/2024

Electronically signed and notarized online using the Proof platform.

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**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO**

**State of Ohio *ex rel.* Ohio Democratic  
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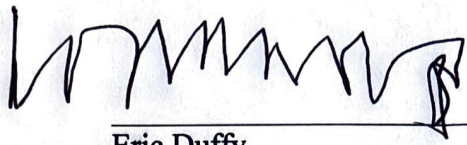
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**AFFIDAVIT OF RELATOR ERIC DUFFY**

---

I, Eric Duffy, having been duly sworn and cautioned according to law, hereby state that I am over the age of eighteen years and am competent to testify to the facts set forth below based on my personal knowledge, and further state as follows:

1. I reside at 185 Crestview Rd., Columbus, in the State of Ohio.
2. I am qualified to vote in the State of Ohio, and I am registered to vote in Franklin County, Ohio.
3. I am blind and, although I have often voted in person using accessible voting machines in the past, I have recently been in and out of the hospital and was just released from my most recent hospital stay yesterday. I am unsure of whether my health will permit me to vote in person this year. As a result, I plan to vote absentee.
4. Rather than mailing my ballot, I intend to rely on the assistance of a trusted friend to return my ballot in person, as I want to make sure that my ballot arrives on time and is properly counted.
5. However, my preferred assistant has difficulty walking and standing in line for extended periods of time. I am confident that my preferred assistant could deliver my ballot to a drop box. However, I do not feel comfortable asking them to park at or near the board of elections office, walk into the office, stand in line, and then walk back to their car, as I am unsure of whether they could do so safely and without pain and significant exertion.
6. As a result, if Directive 2024-21 is not rescinded, I will no longer be able to receive assistance from a person of my choice.

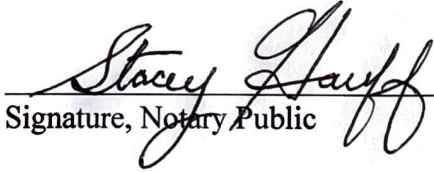


Eric Duffy

State of Ohio;

County of Franklin; ss.

Sworn to before me this 27th day of September 2024.

  
Signature, Notary Public



Stacey N. Hauff, Attorney at Law  
Notary Public, State of Ohio  
My Commission Has No Expiration Date  
Sec 147.03 RC

My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF OHIO**

**State of Ohio *ex rel.* Ohio Democratic  
Party, *et al.*,**

**Relators,**

**v.**

**Frank LaRose, in his official capacity as Ohio  
Secretary of State,**

**Respondent.**

**Case No. 2024-1361**

Original Action in Mandamus Pursuant to  
Article XVI, Section 1 of the Ohio  
Constitution

Expedited Election Case  
Pursuant to Supreme Court Rule of  
Practice 12.08

Peremptory and Alternative Writs  
Requested

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**AFFIDAVIT OF CASSANDRA D'AULA**

---


I, Cassandra D'Aula, having been duly sworn and cautioned according to law, hereby state that I am over the age of eighteen years and am competent to testify to the facts set forth below based on my personal knowledge, and further state as follows:

1. I reside at 3541 Beulah Rd., Columbus, in the State of Ohio.
2. I met Eric Duffy, a relator in the above-captioned lawsuit, about a decade ago when we both testified in support of ride share services at a city council meeting—he, as a rider, and I, as a driver.
3. Since then, I have regularly provided assistance to Eric, who is blind. For example, I have driven him places, read documents aloud to him, filled out forms for him, and assisted him with inaccessible software.
4. Last week, Eric informed me that he intends to vote by absentee ballot this year due to the unpredictability of his health. He asked me if I would be willing to return his absentee ballot for him, and I agreed, as long as doing so would not require me to walk or stand for more than ten minutes.
5. I have arthritis in my knees, and I cannot walk long distances or stand for more than ten minutes.
6. I am willing and able to return Eric's ballot to a drop box for him, as driving is not a problem for me.
7. I would like to return Eric's ballot for him, as I know that he trusts me to assist him with important tasks. I understand that Eric wants me to return his ballot by drop box rather than

by mail because he has usually voted in person, and he wants to make sure that his ballot is received by election officials.

8. However, I will not be able to assist Eric if Directive 2024-21 is in place and requires me to sign an attestation form at the board of elections office, because that would force me to park my car, potentially walk up to several blocks, and stand in line for an uncertain period of time to complete an attestation form before walking back to my car. My mobility issues would prohibit me from doing that.

State of Ohio ;  
County of Franklin ; ss.

  
Cassandra D'Aula  
Cassandra D'Aula

Sworn to before me this 2nd day of October, 2024.

Christine McCarthy  
Printed Name, Notary Public

Christine McCarthy  
Signature, Notary Public



CHRISTINE MCCARTHY  
Notary Public  
State of Ohio  
My Comm. Expires  
October 26, 2027

My commission expires Oct. 26, 2027



# Analysis: Frank LaRose changes the rules for using ballot drop boxes ahead of November election

Howard Wilkinson : 6-8 minutes : 9/6/2024

Published September 6, 2024 at 2:47 AM EDT

You would think that after losing so many political battles in the past few years, Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose would be used to it.

But this latest one, coming off a federal court ruling that Ohio voters with disabilities should have better opportunities to cast ballots, has really set him off.

He's been a busy fellow since that court decision that [removed the limits of an Ohio law](#) on who could place ballots in drop boxes:

- He has asked his fellow Republican leaders in the Ohio General Assembly to consider doing away entirely with the ballot drop boxes — currently one per county — that sit outside the 88 county boards of elections;
- He wants the legislature to [adopt a "proof of citizenship" status](#) to voter registration papers, to address the nearly non-existent problem of non-citizens voting, which already is illegal;
- And he has, [through a directive](#) to all 88 county boards of elections, made it harder for Ohioans to use drop boxes to drop off a ballot for a disabled friend or family member, forcing them to go inside the board office and sign an "attestation," which would essentially render the drop box useless.

Democrats and voting rights organizations are furious over that last directive LaRose recently sent to boards of elections.

## ANALYSIS: LaRose found 137 non-citizens registered to vote. It's not as serious as it sounds

Tuesday morning, a group of Cincinnati's best-known Democratic elected officials and their supporters gathered for a press conference outside the Hamilton County Board of Elections where they had to compete with ambulance sirens and highway traffic to get their message out.

"You can either make it easier for people to vote or you are making it harder," said U.S. Rep. Greg Landsman. "The secretary of state has chosen to make it harder.

"Voters don't like it. So stop doing this stuff."

LaRose's press secretary sent a written response to W VXU when asked for comment.

"It must be football season because the uninformed Monday morning quarterbacks are out in full force," LaRose said. "This is why election laws should be made at the Statehouse, not the courthouse."





Paul Vernon

/

AP

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose speaks to the Fairfield County Lincoln Republican Club in Pickerington, Ohio, Thursday, March 24, 2022.

LaRose says what worries him, and why he implemented the new rule, is the specter of “ballot harvesting” — where some person or organization gathers up absentee ballots en masse and dumps them in a drop box at the local board of elections.

Examples of ballot harvesting have been exceedingly rare in Ohio in the five years since drop boxes were placed outside election board offices.

But Dan Lusheck, LaRose's press secretary, told WVXU that doesn't mean the secretary of state's office shouldn't be on the lookout for the illegal activity.

"Bank robberies and hijackings are relatively rare, but that doesn't mean we don't have safeguards to prevent them from happening," Lusheck said.

### **RELATED: Ohio Secretary of State orders limits on use of secure ballot drop boxes in this fall's election**

LaRose says the ruling in the recent lawsuit filed by the ACLU, with help from the League of Women Voters of Ohio, forced his hand.

"This (ruling) effectively creates an unintended loophole in Ohio's ballot harvesting law that we must address," LaRose wrote in the letter to boards of elections, [according to the Columbus Dispatch](#). "I suspect this is exactly the outcome the (League of Women Voters of Ohio) intended. Under the guise of assisting the disabled, their legal strategy seeks to make Ohio's elections less secure and more vulnerable to cheating, especially as it relates to the use of drop boxes."

In his note to WVXU, he added that, as secretary of state, it is his "duty to maintain the careful balance between security and convenience."

"Unfortunately, recent irresponsible activist litigation upset that balance and created an unacceptable level of risk to the integrity of our process. I was left no choice but to implement this thoughtful and balanced policy in response."

## 'It makes no sense'

At Tuesday's press conference in Norwood, Hamilton County Democratic Party Chairwoman Gwen McFarlin — who also chairs the county board of elections — said she believes LaRose's directive is "illegal."

"Only a dictator can change the law, and Frank LaRose is not a dictator," McFarlin said.

She pointed out that for every job in the board of elections there are two people doing that job — one Democrat and one Republican.

"I can't go anywhere near that box (alone)," McFarlin said.

By chance, as folks were leaving the press conference, two employees — each with his own key — were opening the drop box to take out absentee ballot requests.

Five years ago, LaRose issued a directive to the 88 county boards of elections saying that they could have only one secure ballot drop box per county.

By contrast, in Washington state, the city of Seattle and Kings County have over 60 boxes where voters can drop off ballots.

### COMMENTARY: Frank LaRose says he's about 'election integrity.' His actions say otherwise

At the Tuesday press conference, Cincinnati Mayor Aftab Pureval said he believes LaRose and his allies in the Ohio GOP are doing all of this for their party's candidate for president.

The plan, Pureval believes, is to undermine voters' trust in the system while "intimidating and suppressing" voters — particularly voters of color.

"It really all comes back to Donald Trump," Pureval said. "They are going to do everything they can to fix things so Trump doesn't have to accept defeat in November."

Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus said LaRose's requirement that a person dropping off a ballot for a disabled relative go into the board of elections and sign as "attestation" seems a bridge too far.

"So, you have to go inside to sign a form saying, 'I am doing what I am doing,' " Driehaus said. "It makes no sense."

# Ohioans can only use election drop boxes to submit their own ballots, Secretary of State Frank LaRose orders

Updated: Sep. 05, 2024, 10:14 a.m. | Published: Sep. 03, 2024, 4:23 p.m. : 5-6 minutes : 9/3/2024



A voter drops off their ballot at a drop box at the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections in Cleveland.  
Joshua Gunter, [cleveland.com](https://www.cleveland.com)

By

- [Jeremy Pelzer, cleveland.com](https://www.cleveland.com)

COLUMBUS, Ohio—Ballot drop boxes in Ohio can only be used by people to submit their own early absentee ballots for the 2024 general election, under a directive issued Friday by Secretary of State Frank LaRose.

Under the directive, anyone returning a completed ballot on behalf of someone else can't use a drop box stationed at one of Ohio's 88 county boards of elections. Instead, that person must either mail the ballot or turn it in inside the elections office, where they [must sign a form](#) saying they are returning the ballot within the bounds of the law.

Ohio law allows for only close relatives to return ballots, though a federal court recently ruled that the restriction cannot apply to disabled voters.

Elections staff must post [a sign](#) at each drop box alerting users of the policy.

The directive does not state what, if any, consequences there are if someone refuses to sign such a form, though the form notes that election falsification is a fifth-degree felony in Ohio.

LaRose's directive, issued less than 40 days before the start of early voting for the November election, states the new rules are designed to curb "ballot harvesting," in which absentee ballots are collected and submitted en masse.

"It is important to ensure the integrity of each vote delivered on behalf of an absent voter," the directive states. "The security of the delivery of absentee ballots remains paramount, especially as it applies to the use of

**RELATORS\_023**

unattended drop box receptacles.”

LaRose, a Columbus Republican, stated in a letter to Republican legislative leaders that he issued the directive in response to [a federal court ruling in July](#) striking down part of a 2023 law that limited who could turn in a disabled voter’s ballot. LaRose asserted that the ruling creates a ballot-harvesting “loophole” that could be exploited by ballot harvesters operating “under the guise of assisting the disabled.”

**READ MORE: [Frank LaRose asks lawmakers to ban Ohio ballot drop boxes, require proof of citizenship for voter registration](#)**

LaRose urged lawmakers to take some sort of action in response – suggesting a total ban on ballot drop boxes, which have been a source of debate for years between Republicans and Democrats in Ohio.

Last year, state lawmakers -- in [the same law](#) restricting who can turn in another voter’s ballot -- specified that only one drop box can be set up per county at that county’s board of elections office.

House Minority Leader Allison Russo of suburban Columbus, who -- like other Ohio Democrats -- has often criticized LaRose’s election policies, denounced LaRose’s directive in a statement.

“Secretary LaRose’s out-of-touch restrictions will make it harder for people with disabilities, the elderly, and their families to vote, which goes against our commitment to making voting accessible for everyone,” Russo stated. “Making voting more difficult under the guise of security does not serve our communities (and) it does not put Ohioans first— it undermines their ability to participate in our democracy.”

Catherine Turcer, executive director of Common Cause Ohio, said in an interview that she is “flabbergasted” that LaRose’s response to a court ruling that helps disabled voters to cast ballots is to impose rules that make it more inconvenient for disabled voters to cast ballots.

Turcer also said she didn’t know how enforceable the new directive would be, and she said she wouldn’t be surprised if it’s challenged in court -- though she said she wasn’t aware of any such challenge being prepared.

[Ohio law](#) allows LaRose, the state’s top elections official, to issue directives like the one he issued Friday. Because this directive was issued less than 90 days before the general election, it only remains in effect until mid-December.

Such temporary directives, unlike permanent directives, aren’t subject to public comment or review.

- [Conservative activists are trying to cancel thousands of Ohioans’ voter registrations: Capitol Letter](#)
- [Ohio’s controversial ban on foreign contributions to state ballot-issue campaigns takes effect, at least for now](#)
- [Ohio will invalidate votes for 2024 presidential candidate Jill Stein because of VP swap](#)

*[Jeremy Pelzer covers state politics and policy for Cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer.](#)*

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# No drop boxes for those submitting others' ballots, LaRose orders: Capitol Letter

Updated: Sep. 04, 2024, 8:02 a.m. | Published: Sep. 04, 2024, 8:00 a.m. : 6-7 minutes : 9/4/2024



Ohio Secretary of State and Republican candidate for U.S. Senate Frank LaRose speaks to supporters during a campaign event in Hamilton, Ohio, Monday, March 18, 2024. (AP Photo/Paul Vernon, File)AP

By

- [Jake Zuckerman, jzuckerman@cleveland.com](mailto:jzuckerman@cleveland.com)

**Boxed in:** Ohioans can only use ballot drop boxes to submit their own ballots for the 2024 general election, under a new directive from Secretary of State Frank LaRose. [As Jeremy Pelzer reports](#), the directive states that anyone dropping off a ballot for someone else – which can be anyone chosen by a disabled voter, but only a close relative for non-disabled voters – must go into a county elections office, where they'll be asked to sign a form affirming they are legally allowed to deliver the ballot. LaRose, a Republican, argues the rule is needed to prevent illegal ballot harvesting following a federal court ruling allowing disabled voters to pick anyone they want to deliver their ballots; Democrats and voting-rights activists, meanwhile, castigated the directive.

**Frank-ly speaking:** In addition to the directive, LaRose called on state lawmakers to consider banning all ballot drop boxes and require proof of citizenship for voter registration, among other measures. [As Pelzer reports](#), spokespeople for Republican legislative leaders were non-committal about taking action on LaRose's requests, which also drew criticism from Democrats and voting-rights activists.

**Making their case:** State Republicans made their official defense of the ballot language they wrote summarizing Issue 1, the redistricting-reform amendment, in court on Tuesday. [Per Andrew Tobias](#), that includes saying the language accurately describes Issue 1 as requiring gerrymandering, even though the amendment text itself says it bans partisan gerrymandering. The dispute has to do with how the amendment would require the state's political district maps to favor each party in proportion to their share of the statewide vote.



**Abortion shifts:** Since U.S. Sen. JD Vance of Ohio became former President Donald Trump's vice-presidential running mate this summer, the Cincinnati Republican has gone from saying he'd like abortion to be illegal to saying he'd "absolutely commit" to not imposing a federal ban on abortion if the pair win in November. [Sabrina Eaton has a timeline](#) of Vance's abortion statements.

**Debate debate:** With debates already scheduled for the presidential election and in competitive U.S. Senate races in Montana and Arizona, will Sen. Sherrod Brown and his Republican opponent Bernie Moreno face off in Ohio's ultra-contested, highly-expensive senate race? [Tobias writes](#) that the answer is probably yes based on recent history and candidate comments, but nothing is scheduled – yet.

**No subsidies for Chinese solar:** A bipartisan Senate coalition led by Ohio's Sherrod Brown is backing legislation that aims to keep Chinese solar and clean energy companies from claiming federal subsidies for their U.S. manufacturing facilities, [Eaton reports](#). Brown said the "American Tax Dollars for American Solar Manufacturing Act" legislation he introduced would ensure that only American manufacturers with a genuine domestic supply chain benefit from tax credits intended to strengthen American energy independence by building out the supply chain for solar, wind, critical mineral, and battery projects.

**More Vance:** Years before he became the Republican vice-presidential nominee, Vance endorsed a little-noticed 2017 report by the Heritage Foundation that proposed a sweeping conservative agenda to restrict sexual and reproductive freedoms and remake American families. [The New York Times reports](#). He wrote the volume's introduction and was the keynote speaker at the public release of the report at Heritage's offices in Washington.

## What we're watching this week

1. Lt. Gov. Jon Husted will speak at the Upper Valley Career Center on Wednesday in Piqua
2. The Controlling Board, a spending panel of lawmakers overseeing state spending, meets Monday (Sept. 9)
3. Arguments are due in the legal subplot of Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost's fight with Democrats on the Ohio Ballot Board, an offshoot of a redistricting case, by Friday
4. Early voting in the November election starts in 34 days

## On the Move

U.S. Rep. Emilia Sykes, an Akron Democrat who is facing a challenge from Republican former Ohio Rep. Kevin Coughlin, is up with her first TV ad of the campaign cycle. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee says it's part of a multimillion-dollar ad buy from the Sykes campaign.

## Birthdays

Jaclyn Mulvain, legislative aide to state Rep. Richard Brown

Mason Olds, legislative aide to state Rep. Haraz Ghanbari

State Sen. Kent Smith

## Straight From The Source

"3 of 4 Members of Senate Leadership are attorneys but it's this law school dropout getting cited by a federal judge in his decision."

Ohio Senator Niraj Antani, a Republican who warned in a floor speech about the constitutional problem with prohibiting lawful permanent residents from contributing to political organizations, commenting on social media about [a judge's ruling](#) that blocked the recently passed law that did as much.

- [JD Vance seems to blame car seats for birthrate decline: JD Vance in the news](#)
- [Chiropractor public records case may turn on court's interpretation of single-subject rule: Capitol Letter](#)
- [Mike Dovilla for Ohio House 17th District: endorsement editorial](#)

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# Ohio Sec. of State LaRose proposes eliminating ballot drop boxes, changes rules ahead of election • Ohio Capital Journal

Morgan Trau : 7-9 minutes : 9/4/2024

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose has asked Statehouse leaders to create a law eliminating ballot drop boxes after a court ruled that people with disabilities should have more opportunities to vote. Using his own powers, he put more steps in place for voters to use drop boxes ahead of the November election.

Nearly four million Ohioans voted last November, with 1 in 4 people voting absentee, according to state data.

State Sen. Bill DeMora, D-Columbus, worries that LaRose's new proposals will make that much more difficult to do.

"Working people work — they go home and they vote and they drive it to the board of elections knowing that the law already says it has to be a secure location, it has to be monitored," DeMora said.

LaRose issued a directive Friday that requires someone delivering an absentee ballot for another person to sign an attestation that they are complying with state law — which means they must go into the board of elections to sign the form.

"As a practical matter, this means that only a voter's personal ballot may be returned via drop box," LaRose ordered.

The secretary also sent a letter to legislative leaders asking them to either drastically cut down who can submit an absentee ballot to a drop box or eliminate the use of drop boxes entirely.

DeMora called it ridiculous.

"It hurts working people and working families and college students — the people, of course, who don't vote for Republicans," DeMora said. "They make it tougher for people to vote, make it tougher for people to take their own spouse's ballot to the one box in the county that they're allowed to have to drop off their ballots, anything they can do to make it tougher to vote."

In his letter, LaRose explained his worry is about ballot harvesting — someone collecting a bunch of other people's ballots and submitting them. But right now, there is a defined list of who can submit absentee ballots.

In 2023, Ohio House Bill 458 changed state law so the only people allowed to deliver a sealed absentee ballot besides the voter are members of the postal service or specific relatives. This includes a spouse, a parent, grandparent, child, sibling, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew. It excludes caregivers, employees of a care facility, grandchildren, cousins, neighbors, friends and anyone else unrelated.

If anyone not listed returns the ballot, that would be a fourth-degree felony. If a voter receives a felony conviction for helping their loved one, they would no longer be able to vote themselves.

Case Western Reserve University elections law professor Atiba Ellis explained that this letter stems from a case LaRose lost in federal court earlier this summer.

“These proposals have come in the wake of the recent lawsuit that has required the state of Ohio to offer more opportunities for persons with disabilities to get assistance when voting,” Ellis said.

Jen Miller with the League of Women Voters of Ohio (LWV) filed a lawsuit along with the ACLU, saying Ohio is violating the federal Americans with Disabilities Act and the Voting Rights Act.

A U.S. district court sided with Miller, striking down that specific provision of the law.

LaRose, in his letter, claimed that the LWV wanted to “make Ohio’s elections less secure and more vulnerable to cheating, especially as it relates to the use of drop boxes.”

“This effectively creates an unintended loophole in Ohio’s ballot harvesting law that we must address,” he alleged. “The security of the delivery of absentee ballots remains paramount, so this leaves us with the obvious question of a remedy.”

We reached out to LaRose’s office to ask exactly what loophole LWV created but did not hear back.

The ruling just struck down the one provision that dealt with people with disabilities and who can deliver their absentee ballot for just them.

To be clear, there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud. However, Republican leaders across the country have cast doubt on mail-in or drop-boxed ballots.

“The desire to eliminate drop boxes, narrow the ways that one can vote — to what almost seems like simply in-person on Election Day — is driven by the belief that the other methods are somehow automatically fraudulent,” Ellis explained.

There have rarely been any significant examples of voter fraud via drop box, the nonpartisan professor expert said.

“All too often, the evidence of fraud is evidence of partisans, and most notably Republican partisans, in other states who have tried to manipulate absentee ballots,” he continued.

DeMora said LaRose is trying to stay relevant after losing his primary for U.S. Senate earlier this year.

“This is another solution, another MAGA solution to a problem that doesn’t exist here,” DeMora said, insulting LaRose at length — even asking for the secretary to run against him in 2026 for state Senate to see what happens. “It’s time for him to just to go away and leave the people of Ohio alone because we have fair elections as it is and he’s just trying to ruin it.”

This is another way LaRose is trying to prevent the November redistricting amendment from passing, DeMora added.

LaRose has argued that he is not trying to disenfranchise voters, but rather protect against fraud that could happen.

He also proposed two other ideas in his letter. He asked for lawmakers to adopt a proof-of-citizenship requirement for voter registration and for changes on the ability to cast a provisional ballot.

We reached out to both House Speaker Jason Stephens, R-Kitts Hill, and Senate President Matt Huffman, R-Lima, for comment about the proposal they received from LaRose.

“It’s an important issue we need to consider to ensure our elections are secure,” Stephens said.

Huffman’s spokesperson John Fortney also said the Senate would consider it.

“Protecting the integrity of Ohio’s elections remains a priority as we witness the impact of the Biden administration’s dangerous failure to secure the border. Secretary LaRose has led the effort to protect Ohio’s election system by working with the General Assembly to pass common sense voter ID laws, including photo ID. We look forward to continuing the discussion to protect our state and local elections from a growing danger,” Fortney said.

But not all Ohio Republicans agreed with LaRose’s unsubstantiated claims of incoming ballot harvesting. When asked, Gov. Mike DeWine physically scoffed at LaRose’s ideas.

“Look, I have said consistently that I think we do a very good job in Ohio running elections,” DeWine said. “I think anyone who wants to change what we do has a burden of proof of showing that there’s a problem with what we do now.”

Ohio lawmakers aren’t expected back until after the November election, so drop boxes can still be used for now — but with more steps.

Follow [WEWS](#) statehouse reporter Morgan Trau on [X](#) and [Facebook](#).

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# Ohio Secretary of State orders limits on use of ballot drop boxes | Reporters Roundtable

Leigh Barr : 4-6 minutes



Published September 6, 2024 at 5:00 AM EDT



Ryan Loew

/

Ideastream Public Media

A person uses a ballot drop box located outside the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections on Oct. 27, 2022.

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose has directed county boards of election to [limit how voters can use ballot drop boxes](#) in this fall's election. LaRose's directive requires that a voter can only put their own absentee ballot in a drop box. If they are dropping off a ballot for a family member or someone else as allowed by state law, the voter must sign a form with the board stating they are lawfully assisting the other voter.

The story begins this week's discussion of news on the "Reporters Roundtable."



A federal judge this week struck down part of a new Ohio law that [attempted to ban foreign nationals from donating](#) to state ballot issue campaigns. The bill passed in a special session of the legislature earlier this summer and was to go into effect on Sept. 1.

The Cleveland Browns will be playing their home games at [Huntington Bank Field](#) for the next two decades regardless of whether they stay at their current stadium or build a new domed site in Brook Park. The team announced the deal earlier this week. FirstEnergy previously held naming rights at the stadium, but that deal was ended early due to the scandal involving the company and the passage of the so-called "nuclear bailout bill," House Bill 6.

A working group has delivered 26 recommendations on how to [improve Ohio's Department of Youth Services](#). The state's Juvenile Justice Working Group delivered its report alongside Governor Mike DeWine this week. One of its chief recommendations is that children under the age of 14 should not be placed in juvenile lockups.

Rain and storms are in the forecast for Friday but it likely won't be enough to end drought conditions in much of the state. The [U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated 23 Ohio counties as natural disaster areas](#) due to drought. The counties in the disaster declarations have experienced eight or more weeks of severe drought. Nearly all of the state's 88 counties are listed in drought conditions ranging from abnormally dry to severe drought. The conditions are milder in the northern part of the state but the drought is expected to persist into the fall.

#### Guests:

-**Kabir Bhatia**, Senior Reporter, Ideastream Public Media

-**Matt Richmond**, Reporter, Ideastream Public Media

-**Karen Kasler**, Statehouse News Bureau Chief, Ohio Public Radio/TV

Leigh Barr is a coordinating producer for the "Sound of Ideas" and the "Sound of Ideas Reporters Roundtable."

# Ohio Secretary of State orders limits on use of secure ballot drop boxes in fall's election

Karen Kasler : 2-3 minutes : 9/5/2024

Published September 5, 2024 at 1:35 AM EDT

A few days after suggesting to state lawmakers that they ban secure ballot drop boxes entirely, Republican Secretary of State Frank LaRose has limited their use in this fall's election.

**LaRose's directive** to boards of elections said that only the voter can drop the absentee ballot they're casting into a ballot drop box during early voting. If the ballot is being dropped off by a family member or someone on the list that's in a state law that took effect last year, that person must come into the board office and sign a form stating they are lawfully assisting that voter.

LaRose said it's to prevent absentee ballots being collected and delivered all at once. That's usually done to help elderly and disabled voters or those in rural areas. But Republicans have claimed this practice of ballot harvesting is open to fraud.

A law passed last year limited counties to a single ballot drop box. House Bill 458 also allowed only certain relatives to return ballots for disabled voters: "the voter's spouse, father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, brother, or sister of the whole or half blood, or the voter's son, daughter, adopting parent, adopted child, stepparent, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece." That part of the law was put on hold in July by a federal court ruling that found it violates a provision of the Voting Rights Act.

"We know that a lot of voters are challenged with reaching the mailbox, sealing the envelope, or getting it to the one county dropbox," Jen Miller of the League of Women Voters of Ohio said after that decision.

Last week LaRose sent a letter to state lawmakers, suggesting they consider banning ballot drop boxes altogether because they make it hard to guard against ballot harvesting. But Gov. Mike DeWine, who is also a Republican, **said** for the **second time** this year he doesn't want any more changes in Ohio's voting laws, and that anyone who wants to do so has to prove to him that change is needed.

# Ohio Secretary of State changes ballot drop box rules, calls for their elimination

Natalie Fahmy : 6-8 minutes : 9/4/2024

COLUMBUS, Ohio ([WCMH](#)) — There are just over two months until Election Day, and politicians have just made some last-minute changes to how Ohioans can cast their ballot.

“There has to be some end to changing rules,” Governor Mike DeWine said.

“Really, I don’t want to make any changes to the way that we run elections in Ohio unless they’re forced upon us,” Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose said. “And in this case, it was as a result of a recent lawsuit that we had to make this change.”

A federal judge recently ruled that Ohioans with disabilities can choose anyone to help deliver their ballot, not just those on the select state-approved list for who can submit a ballot on another’s behalf. LaRose said that prompted action on his part, as he distributed new orders for boards of elections and a request to eliminate all drop boxes in Ohio.

Under [current state law](#), one ballot drop box is allowed at each county board of elections, and the law has a list of relatives who may deliver an absentee ballot on behalf of someone else. That list includes the person’s: spouse, parent (including adopting or stepparent), parent-in-law, grandparent, sibling (including half sibling), child (including adopted or stepchild), aunt/uncle and niece/nephew. With the new ruling, Ohioans with disabilities could ask anyone, and LaRose worries this could cause problems.

“When people decide to try to make election laws at a courthouse instead of a state house, they can create unforeseen problems,” he said. “That (decision) really undid the balance that we try to strike between convenience and security.”

Now, in [this directive](#) to county boards of elections, LaRose made it so voters can only put their own ballot in a drop box.

“Which to be clear, is not the preferred method,” LaRose said. “The best way to return your absentee ballot is to simply mail it in.”

Under the directive, if someone is dropping a ballot off for a family member or disabled person, they now have to do it in person.

“If you decide to play mailman and you want to drive it down to the Board of Elections yourself, you currently have the convenience of using that 24/7 drop box to deliver your ballot,” LaRose said. “But what we’re saying is if you’re delivering somebody else’s ballot, then the only way that we really have to make sure that we protect against ballot harvesting in Ohio is that if you’re going to take somebody else’s ballot in, you’ve got to go inside the Board of Elections.”

According to the directive, boards are required to provide the person assisting a voter with an attestation form which declares under penalty of election falsification that they are returning the ballot on behalf of a family member and are lawfully designated to do so or — if assisting a voter with disabilities — that they are complying with the Voting Rights Act.

“It makes it clear that you’re returning a family member’s ballot, which is legal, or you’re returning the ballot of a disabled person, and that that person has, in fact, designated you to be their assistant for purposes of returning their ballot,” LaRose said.

LaRose said allowing people who have disabilities to choose anyone to deliver their ballot and not requiring a face-to-face drop off could cause problems.

“What vulnerability this creates is somebody could pull up at a board of elections with an armload of ballots. You could show up there with 20 ballots. And when the elections officials say, ‘Well, hold on, what are you doing?’ They could say, ‘Oh, yeah, these are for disabled people. You can’t question me. You got to take my word for it and shove those in the in the drop box,’” he said. “Rare that that kind of thing would happen, but we have to protect against those kinds of circumstances.”

He said ballot harvesting does happen, but said “we keep it rare.” He said the tightening of rules surrounding ballot drop-off boxes should not alarm Ohioans or signal to them that the state’s elections are unsafe.

“They’ve got a person who serves as their chief elections officer who takes this seriously,” he said.

LaRose said this is a direct response to “activist groups” trying to change the law in courts. He responded to accusations saying his directive is voter suppression, saying those are groups “looking for relevancy.”

“They’re not serious people,” he said. “Honestly, this kind of election season histrionics by these folks is what I’ve guess you just come to expect.”

LaRose pointed to all the ways Ohioans can cast their ballot in the state, like early voting, weekend hours and by mail.

“Ohioans know that it’s easy to vote in this state,” he said. “Really demonstrably easier than almost any other state in the country.”

But LaRose does not want to stop at this directive — he wants lawmakers to ban all drop boxes. DeWine does not see why that is necessary.

“Look I have said constantly that I think we do a very good job in Ohio running elections,” DeWine said. “I think anyone who wants to change what we do has a burden of proof of showing that there’s a there’s a problem with what we do now.”

Under current state law, ballot drop boxes must be under 24-hour surveillance, and that video is public record. Still LaRose said drop boxes are “more trouble than they’re worth.”

“It’s something I think the legislature should look at. These are only a recent phenomenon. Prior to four or five years ago, nobody ever heard of these things,” he said. “They do create a vector for possible ballot harvesting.



And again, I think that, you know, five years ago, before everybody ever heard of one of these things, we had plenty of ways to return our absentee ballots, which is doing it by mail or driving it down to the board of elections.”

There is currently a senate bill in the Ohio Statehouse to [eliminate ballot drop boxes](#), but it has not had a single hearing since being introduced last year.

“Democrats and Republicans run these elections. They run at the county level. They run at the precinct level. They do a good job. We count our votes pretty quickly. We do it in an accurate way and I’m satisfied with our system,” DeWine said. “I think people who go vote this year can feel confident in the system that we (have) in Ohio.”

[Previous Chapter](#)

[Next Chapter](#)

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# Security or restriction? LaRose's new voter drop box measure sparks controversy

Mary LeBus, Brady Williams : 4-5 minutes : 9/3/2024

CINCINNATI (WXIX) - Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose is under fire after his latest directive that could make it difficult for absentee and disabled voters to participate in the 2024 Election.

On Aug. 31, LaRose issued a new measure for each county Board of Elections regarding the 24/7 ballot drop off box, which is used by absentee voters or people who assist absentee voters with getting their ballot submitted.

Board of Elections officials will be required to ensure that each person returning an absentee ballot is either the voter themselves or that they are helping a family member or disabled voter.

If the individual is not returning their own absentee ballot, then they will be required to go into the board of elections office and fill out an attestation form, which holds them legally accountable under election law.

Independence Alliance in Hamilton County is one of those services that helps disabled residents vote.

"Not every polling place in Hamilton County is accessible to people with disabilities," said Rob Festenstein. "[Independence Alliance works] to make sure - from an advocacy - that there are options for people with disabilities to vote just as anyone else would without any barriers and without being disenfranchised."

Festenstein says if someone has a disability that prevents them from voting in person, they have two options: Vote by mail or send someone to drop off their ballot.

"We don't take a political lens to this," he told FOX19 NOW. "We look at it strictly from the perspective of accessibility for people with disabilities. I believe that requiring someone to make sure they're following the law as opposed to just dropping it in a box is an undue burden."

This new measure comes just a few months after a federal court ruling that stated Ohio House Bill 458 placed restrictions on voters with disabilities. The bill made it a crime for anyone who was not a mail carrier or election official to return an absentee ballot that was not theirs.

While LaRose believes his directive will hold people accountable, Hamilton County Democrats believe it is just another way to restrict voters.

"This is more of the same chaos that we've seen time and time again from those who should be acting as our leaders," said U.S. Congressman Greg Landsman. "All of us – Democrats, Republicans and Independents—can see this for what it really is: A last minute change of the rules designed to confuse voters and restrict our right to vote."

Hamilton County Commission President agreed with Landsman and continued by saying the new rule “targets millions.”

“From purging thousands of voters in Hamilton County alone, to passing the strictest Voter ID Law in the country, to a new restriction on our only countywide 24 hour ballot drop box. There seems to be a continued effort to make it harder for citizens to vote,” Reece said.

As Secretary of State, it is part of LaRose’s job to ensure all elections are secure, fair and honest.

Since 2019, LaRose has implemented a few new policies for election season, including a [stricter Voter ID law](#) and [Ohio’s 2024 Voter Purge](#).

“It is my duty to maintain the careful balance between security and convenience,” LaRose wrote to a media request from FOX19 NOW. “Unfortunately, recent irresponsible activist litigation upset that balance and created an unacceptable level of risk to the integrity of our process. I was left no choice but to implement this thoughtful and balanced policy in response. I can also confidently say it is just as easy, if not easier, to simply mail an absentee ballot or drop it off inside the board of elections. We are proud that it’s both easy to vote AND hard to cheat in Ohio.”

Despite the new rule, Festenstein says that Hamilton County’s board of elections does a great job catering to folks with disabilities.

“They have worked very well with us making sure voting is as accessible as possible,” he added.

*See a spelling or grammar error in our story? [Please click here to report it.](#)*

*Do you have a photo or video of a breaking news story? Send [it to us here](#) with a brief description.*

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# Voting by Mail |

13-17 minutes

Get your [new "I Voted" sticker](#) by voting today in the November 5, 2019 General Election!



## What's on the ballot

Voters have many important local issues to decide. Your ballot may include:

- Candidates for municipal offices such as Mayor and City Council
- Candidates for Board of Education Members
- Candidates for Municipal Court Judges
- Cuyahoga County Proposed Charter Amendment
- Local issues and tax levies

Prepare before you go to vote by looking at your sample ballot ahead of time. Sample ballots are available on our website. Visit the ["My Voting Info"](#) page of our website to find your ballot.





### Voting at the polls

Polls will be open from 6:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. All voters are encouraged to double-check their polling location

because [many locations have changed](#) since last November. To look up your voting location, visit the "[Where Do I Vote](#)" page of our website.

Remember to bring ID with you to the polls. Acceptable forms of ID include:

- A current and valid photo identification card (e.g., driver's license or state ID)
- A military identification
- A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or another government document that shows the voter's name and current address.

**Returning vote-by-mail ballots**

If you have not yet mailed back your vote-by-mail ballot, it must be hand-delivered to the [Cuyahoga County Board of Elections](#) by 7:30 p.m. tonight (Election Day). The postmark deadline was yesterday. There is a ballot drop box located in our parking lot for your convenience.

Note: The ballot CANNOT be returned to your polling location. However, if you prefer to vote at your polling location instead of returning your vote-by-mail ballot, you can choose to vote a [provisional ballot](#).

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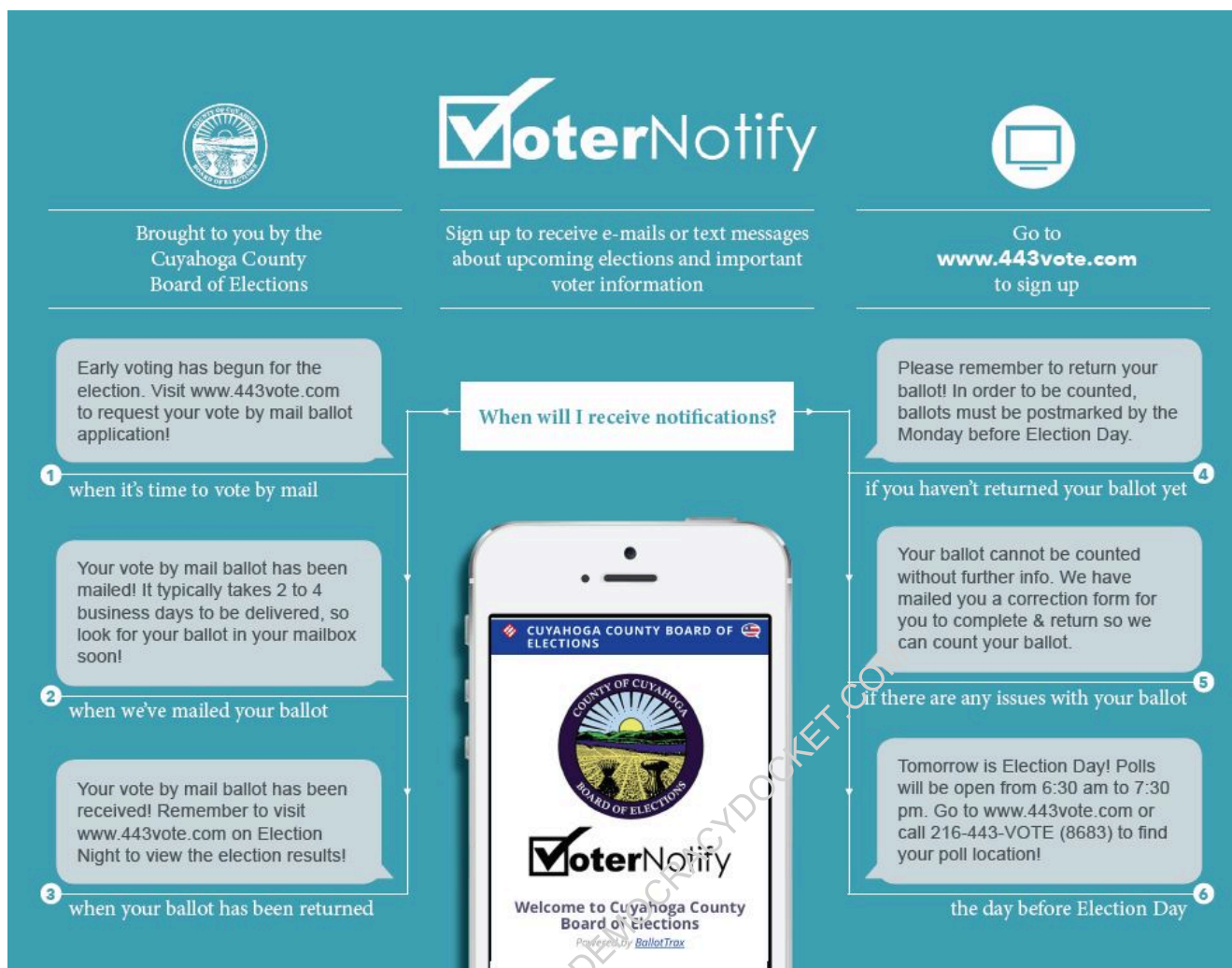




Contact the Board of Elections hotline with any questions or concerns related to voting at 216-443-VOTE.

Voter Notify is a system that informs voters of when the Board of Elections received their Vote-by-Mail ballot applications, when their ballots were mailed and when the Board received their voted ballots. This was done via text message and/or email to people who signed up for the program on the Board's website.

The Board has discontinued the program due to additional security requirements that have been imposed by the State of Ohio. The company that operates Voter Notify is unable to comply at this time with new rules that protect the Board's communications systems.



Voter Notify has been discontinued.

This will affect about 25,000 people who are on the Voter Notify contact list. "I want people to know that the information provided by Voter Notify is on the Board's website," said Anthony Perlatti, Director of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections. "People may securely check their Vote-by-Mail ballot application status, when their ballots were mailed, and confirm that the Board has received their voted ballot at [www.443VOTE.us](http://www.443VOTE.us). They just need to click "[Track My Ballot](#)" and enter their name and birthdate."





# CUYAHOGA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

- VOTERS ▾
- ELECTIONS ▾
- CANDIDATES ▾
- ELECTION DAY OFFICIALS ▾
- EMPLOYMENT ▾
- ABOUT US ▾

- My Voting Info
- Where do I vote?
- What's on my ballot?
- Vote by Mail
- Track My Ballot
- VOTER SURVEY**
- Update My Address

### Upcoming events

11/5/2019	November 5, 2019 General Election
11/18/2019	November 18, 2019 Board Meeting
11/26/2019	November 26, 2019 Board Meeting

## Track My Ballot

To check the status of your vote by mail ballot,

### Search for Voter Information

Last Name:

Date of Birth:  (MM/DD/YYYY)

All voters are encouraged to become familiar with the wealth of information that is available on the [Board's website](#). This includes confirming their voting locations, registration status, viewing sample ballots, and applying for jobs that include assisting voters on election days.

People who have signed up for Voter Notify will receive letters and/or a phone call informing them that the program has been discontinued.

Author: Mike West, Community Outreach Manager

Early voting has begun for the [November 5, 2019 General Election](#). Voters may cast their ballot in person at the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections leading up to Election Day. Voters may also request to vote by mail.

### Early In-Person Voting

Early In-Person Voting takes place at the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, located at 2925 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115. [Sample ballots](#) are available for review on the Board of Elections website. Here is the early in-person voting schedule:

Weekdays, October 8 – 25 from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Closed October 14)


Weekdays, October 28 – November 1 from 8 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Saturday, November 2 from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.


Sunday, November 3 from 1 – 5 p.m.

Monday, November 4 from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

## NOV. 5 GENERAL ELECTION EARLY VOTING HOURS



WEEKDAYS	OCT. 8 - 25 (CLOSED OCT. 14)	8 AM - 5 PM
WEEKDAYS	OCT. 28 - NOV. 1	8 AM - 7 PM
SATURDAY	NOV. 2	8 AM - 4 PM
SUNDAY	NOV. 3	1 PM - 5 PM
MONDAY	NOV. 4	8 AM - 2 PM



**CUYAHOGA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

2925 EUCLID AVENUE, CLEVELAND, OH 44115

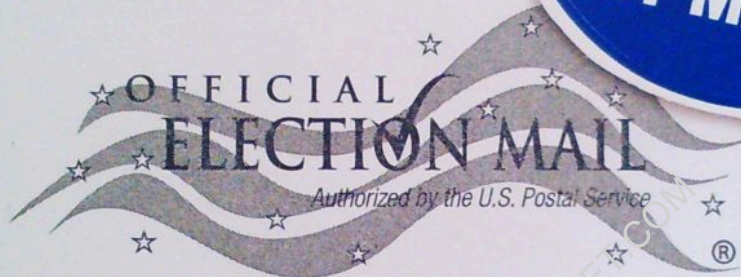
### Voting by Mail

All Ohio voters are eligible to [vote by mail](#). To request a ballot, complete a [vote-by-mail application](#). Voting by mail is safe, convenient and secure. The Board of Elections must receive ballot requests by Saturday, November 2 at noon, however, it is best to request the ballot as soon as possible.

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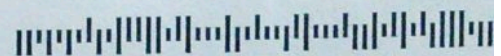
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Completa:

**Notice for  
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franqueo**OFFICIAL ABSENTEE BALLOTING MATERIAL – FIRST CLASS MAIL****CUYAHOGA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

PO BOX 89449

CLEVELAND, OH 44101-6449

**Voting on Election Day**

Voters may choose to cast their ballot on Election Day at their assigned polling location. Polls will be open from 6:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. To view a sample ballot and check your polling location, visit ["My Voting Info"](#) on the Board of Elections website.





A Primary Election will occur on September 10, 2019 for the following municipalities:

- Brook Park

- Fairview Park Ward 5
- Garfield Heights Ward 2
- Lakewood Ward 1
- Maple Heights
- Solon Ward 5

**Not sure of your Ward?** Check your voting information here: <https://boe.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/my-voting-information.aspx>

The **voter registration deadline** is Monday, August 12, 2019 for this election. To register or update your registration online, visit [voteohio.gov](https://voteohio.gov).

**Early voting, either in person or by mail**, will occur August 13 through September 9.

[Click here to request your absentee ballot.](#)

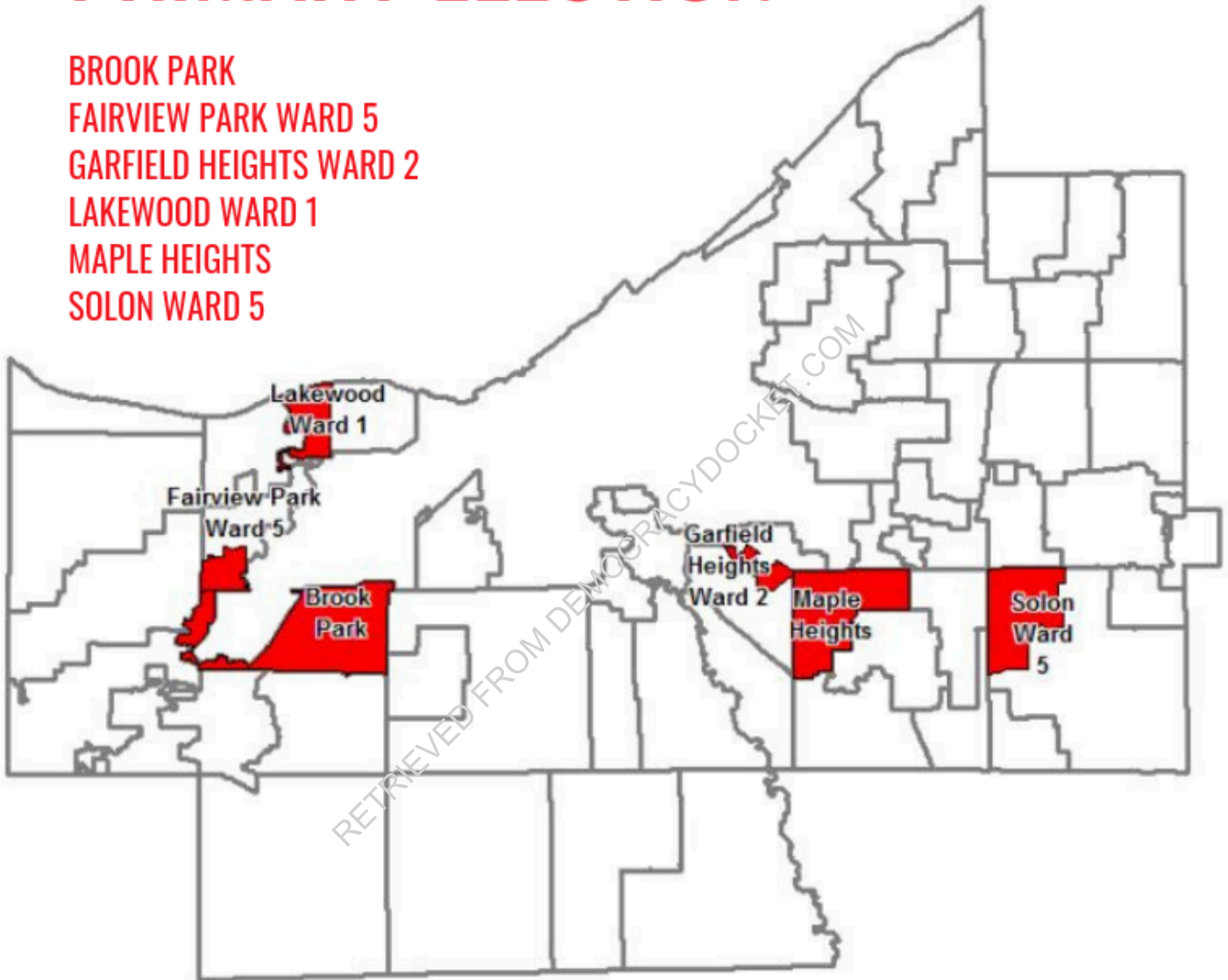
[Click here to view the early voting hours.](#)

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# SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

## PRIMARY ELECTION

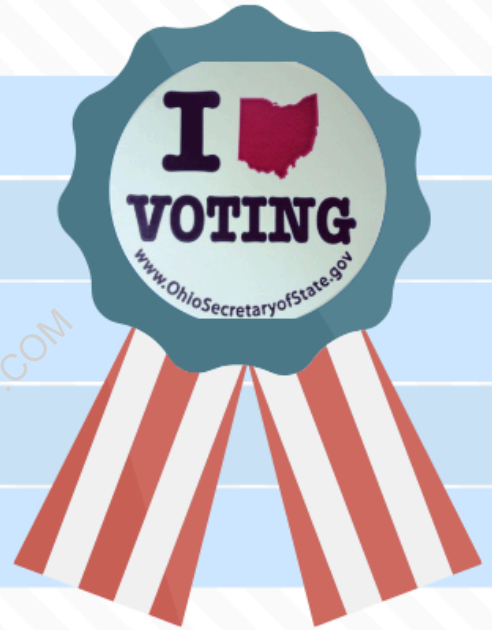
BROOK PARK  
FAIRVIEW PARK WARD 5  
GARFIELD HEIGHTS WARD 2  
LAKEWOOD WARD 1  
MAPLE HEIGHTS  
SOLON WARD 5





# SEPT. 10, 2019 PRIMARY ELECTION EARLY VOTING HOURS

WEEKDAYS	AUG. 13 - 30	8 AM - 5 PM
WEEKDAYS	SEPT. 2 - 6	8 AM - 7 PM
SATURDAY	SEPT. 7	8 AM - 4 PM
SUNDAY	SEPT. 8	1 PM - 5 PM
MONDAY	SEPT. 9	8 AM - 2 PM



CUYAHOGA COUNTY  
BOARD OF ELECTIONS

CUYAHOGA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS  
2925 EUCLID AVENUE, CLEVELAND, OH 44115

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# MAY 7, 2019 PRIMARY ELECTION

POLLS OPEN 6:30 A.M. - 7:30 P.M.

Today, voters in 11 cities across Cuyahoga County will cast votes for local candidates and/or various issues affecting their municipality, school district and libraries.

Polls are open from 6:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

## Election Cities

Bratenahl

Broadview Heights

Brooklyn

Chagrin Falls Village

Euclid

**RELATORS\_052**



Mayfield Village  
Oakwood Village  
Parma  
Parma Heights  
Seven Hills  
Strongsville

### Reminders for Voters

Voters are reminded to bring proper ID with them to the polls today. This includes:

- Unexpired Ohio driver's license or state ID
- Military ID
- Current (within the past 12 months) utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other government document with your name and current address

Any voter that does not know where to vote can look up their polling location on our website. They may also download a sample ballot to review prior to voting.

[Click here for "My Voting Info"](#)

### Vote-by-Mail Ballots

People who vote by mail must be aware that the deadline to mail their ballot has passed. Voted ballots may only be returned to the Board of Elections offices and must be received by 7:30 p.m. tonight. Voters may utilize a special ballot box located in the Board of Elections parking lot at 2925 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland ([Map](#)). Ballots cannot be dropped off at a voting location on Election Day.

### Spanish Hotline

Spanish-speaking voters needing special assistance on Election Day may call our Spanish Hotline at 216-443-3233. We will gladly help you!

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# **Línea Directa Para Asistencia en Español el Día de las Elecciones**



**216.443.3233**

Mayo 7 de 2019 es la elección primaria. Utiliza la línea directa en español para conocer dónde votas, verificar tu estatus como elector o reportar situaciones en los lugares de votación.



**JUNTA ELECTORAL DEL  
CONDADO DE CUYAHOGA**

# MAY 7, 2019 PRIMARY ELECTION

## EARLY VOTING HOURS

WEEKDAYS	APR. 9 - 26	8 AM - 5 PM
WEEKDAYS	APR. 29 - MAY 3	8 AM - 7 PM
SATURDAY	MAY 4	8 AM - 4 PM
SUNDAY	MAY 5	1 PM - 5 PM
MONDAY	MAY 6	8 AM - 2 PM



CUYAHOGA COUNTY  
BOARD OF ELECTIONS

CUYAHOGA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

2925 EUCLID AVENUE, CLEVELAND, OH 44115

Early voting has started for the May 7, 2019 Primary Election. Voters may cast their ballots at the Board of Elections located at [2925 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115](#) now through May 6.

### Early Voting Hours

#### Weekday Voting:

April 9 – 25 (M-F, 8AM – 5PM)

April 29 – May 3 (M-F, 8AM – 7PM)

May 6 (Mon., 8AM – 2PM)

#### Weekend Voting:

May 4 (Sat., 8AM – 4PM)

May 5 (Sun., 1PM – 5PM)

The early voting process has changed slightly to create an experience similar to Election Day. [Learn more about the early voting process here.](#) Voters are reminded to bring [proper ID](#) with them. If they do not have ID,

**RELATORS\_055**



they may provide the last four digits of their social security number to receive their ballot.

### Voting by Mail

Voters who prefer to vote by mail must request their ballot no later than noon on Saturday, May 4. However, it is always better to place the request sooner rather than later. Voting by mail is safe, secure and convenient, and it is open to all voters.

Request your absentee ballot here: [Vote-by-Mail Application](#)



Today is Election Day! Polls are open from 6:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. Voters will have many important decisions to make from state and federal offices to state and local issues in this midterm [General Election](#).

### Reminders for Voters

Voters are reminded to bring proper ID with them to the polls today. This includes:

- Unexpired Ohio driver's license or state ID

**RELATORS\_056**



- Military ID
- Current (within the past 12 months) utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, or other government document with your name and current address

Any voter that does not know where to vote can look up their polling location on our website. They may also download a sample ballot to review prior to voting.

[Click here for "My Voting Info"](#)

### Vote-by-Mail Ballots

People who vote by mail must be aware that the deadline to mail their ballot has passed. Voted ballots may only be returned to the Board of Elections office and must be received by 7:30 p.m. tonight. Voters may utilize a special ballot box located in the Board of Elections parking lot at 2925 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland ([Map](#)). Ballots cannot be dropped off at a voting location on Election Day, however, if a voter cannot return their ballot the Board of Elections they may vote a provisional ballot at their polling place.

Early voting for the [November 6, 2018 General Election](#) begins today. Voters are invited to take advantage of this convenience by either voting in person at the Board of Elections or by mail.

We kicked off the day by visiting the United States Postal Service where Director Pat McDonald held a press conference to discuss early voting. This morning, 70,000 ballots arrived for mailing and we expect to send out close to 130,000 ballots by the end of this week!



Thousands of vote-by-mail ballots are unloaded as they arrive at the United States Postal Service.

Vote-by-mail & early-voting ballots are projected to make up 30-35% of the total ballots cast this election. Right now, we project close to 45% turnout with approximately 400,000 total ballots cast. We will have a better idea of what turnout will be as we get closer to Election Day.

During his remarks, Director McDonald emphasized the importance of voting. He said, "These ballots represent the democratic voices of tens of thousands of people who will soon be voting. I'm happy to say they will begin arriving in mailboxes later this week."

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Pat McDonald, Director of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, greets members of the media during a press conference to kick off the start of early voting.

Director McDonald also encourages voting by mail, recognizing that Cuyahoga County will be one of the most watched counties in the State of Ohio. We have the highest number of people who vote by mail in the state, illustrating it is a solid and dependable voting method. He stated, "Voting by mail is safe & secure. Throughout my 11 years working at the Board of Elections, we have never had any major issues with delivery or return of ballots through mail. The United States Postal Service is an excellent partner & handles ballots with care & attention."

Fun Fact: Vote-by-mail and early-voted ballots are the first to be counted on election night.

### **Voting by Mail**

There is still plenty of time to vote by mail. The application deadline is noon on November 3, but voters should submit their request ASAP to ensure they receive their ballot well ahead of Election Day on November 6. [Click here for Vote-by-Mail Application form and instructions.](#)

Voters can track their absentee ballot with VoterNotify, a tracking tool that sends a text or email when the absentee ballot has been mailed out and again when it is received at the Board of Elections. [Click here to learn more.](#)

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# Voter Notify

Sign up to receive e-mails or text messages  
about upcoming elections and important  
voter information

When will I receive notifications?



## Early Voting In Person

Voters may vote in person at the Board of Elections located at [2925 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44115](#) during the following dates and times.

Weekdays, October 10 – 26: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Weekdays, October 29 – November 2: 8:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Saturdays, October 27 & November 3: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Sunday, November 4: 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Monday, November 5: 8:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

## Voting at the Polls

Of course, voters may vote on Election Day (November 6, 2018) at their assigned polling location. Polls will be open from 6:30 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. [Click here to find polling location.](#)



Did you know you can track your vote-by-mail ballot? With VoterNotify, you can sign up to receive a text and/or email message:

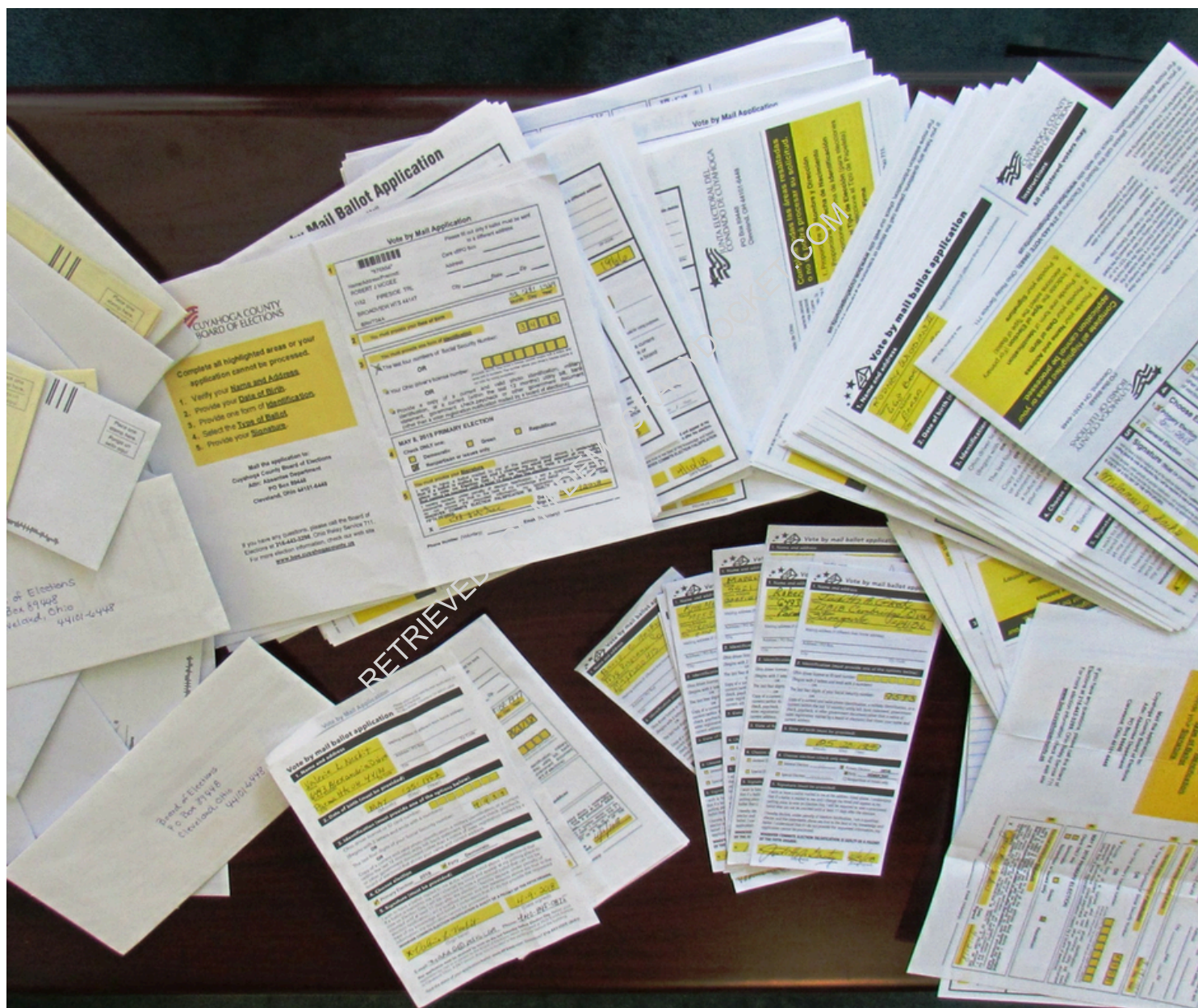
- When your ballot is sent to you.

- When your ballot is received.
- If there's an issue with your ballot.
- Reminder to return your ballot as deadline approaches.

More than 17,000 voters in Cuyahoga County are taking advantage of VoterNotify.

[Learn more here and sign up today.](#)

To request your vote-by-mail ballot, [print your application here](#). We must receive your completed form no later than noon on the Saturday prior to Election Day.



The Board wants to thank the Cuyahoga County Public Library system for conducting Vote by Mail Week.

The public was invited to save a stamp during Vote by Mail Week for the May 8, 2018 Primary Election. County residents were able to save a stamp by dropping off their completed vote by mail applications at any Cuyahoga County Public Library branch between Sunday, April 8th and Saturday, April 14th.



The joint effort between the library system and the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections was a great success. Over 300 people dropped off ballot applications at 27 library branches. This saved voters the price of a stamp and provided the convenience of applications being available at the libraries.

Voters who missed Vote by Mail Week but would still like to vote by mail have until noon on May 5th to request their ballots. To generate your personalized application, [click here](#) then print, sign and return to the Board of Elections via mail or in person drop off. You may also call 216-443-VOTE to request that an application be mailed to you.

Author: Mike West, Media and Voter Education Specialist, Cuyahoga County Board of Elections

RETRIEVED FROM DEMOCRACYDOCKET.COM

August 29, 2024

Honorable Matt Huffman  
President, Ohio Senate  
Ohio Statehouse  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Honorable Jason Stephens  
Speaker, Ohio House of Representatives  
77 South High Street, 14th Floor  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Re: Potential Election Legislation

Dear President Huffman and Speaker Stephens,

I write to make you aware of three policy matters that have recently come to light. To ensure the ongoing integrity of Ohio's elections, I suggest urgent legislative attention to each of them.

1. A federal court's decision in a recent case impacts Ohio's ban on ballot harvesting, likely requiring a re-examination of voting assistance protocols and the security of drop boxes.
2. A new decision by the Supreme Court of the United States gives us an opportunity to better enforce Ohio's constitutional citizenship requirement for participating in elections.
3. The General Assembly should consider adopting a new provisional ballot voting requirement for voters with mismatched registration records.

### **Protecting Ohio's Election Integrity**

First, a federal court's recent decision in a lawsuit brought by the League of Women Voters ("the LWV") impacts Ohio's prohibition on ballot harvesting. Although the decision is limited in scope, it could nonetheless have a broader effect on ballot security.

The LWV sought to challenge certain provisions of House Bill 458, adopted by the General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor in 2023. While the court declined to act on most of the LWV's claims, it issued an order limited in scope to disabled voters who wish to utilize someone other than a relative as defined by R.C. 3509.05 to assist them with the return of an absentee ballot. Specifically, the court prohibited the state from administering, implementing, or enforcing R.C. 3599.21(A)(9) and (A)(10) "against any disabled voter or against any individual who assists any disabled voter."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Op. at 38, 42

The law adopted by the General Assembly in 2023 defined the type of person legally eligible to assist a voter with the return of an absentee ballot as either a qualified relative or a mail carrier. The court determined that this restriction violates Section 208 of the federal Voting Rights Act, which allows a disabled voter to be assisted by “a person of the voter's choice.” Unfortunately, this decision does not provide relief to a family who believes their disabled relative is receiving ballot assistance without their knowledge, approval, or input, or who may have been coerced or misguided by individuals attempting to “assist” their voting decisions.

The court’s decision is limited in scope. However, it highlights a need for additional steps to enforce Ohio’s ban on ballot harvesting. Without the appropriate safeguards, a person could return any number of ballots to an unattended drop box simply by claiming (whether truthfully or not) the permissive authority granted under Section 208. This effectively creates an unintended loophole in Ohio’s ballot harvesting law that we must address. I suspect this is exactly the outcome the LWV intended. Under the guise of assisting the disabled, their legal strategy seeks to make Ohio’s elections less secure and more vulnerable to cheating, especially as it relates to the use of drop boxes. The security of the delivery of absentee ballots remains paramount, so this leaves us with the obvious question of a remedy.

Pending legislative action to address enforcement of Ohio’s prohibition on ballot harvesting I will direct boards to post a notification on each drop box indicating that voter-assisted ballots must be returned inside the board office, where the voter assistant will be asked to complete an attestation form confirming that they are complying with applicable state or federal law. This effectively means ONLY A VOTER’S PERSONAL BALLOT may be returned via drop box. I am acting under my statutory authority to compel the observance of election laws (*see* R.C. 3501.05), in this case Ohio’s ban on ballot harvesting. However, I strongly encourage you to consider codifying any additional safeguards that might be necessary due to attempts to erode the integrity of our elections, including possibly banning drop boxes as a result of this court decision which makes it harder to guard against ballot harvesting.

### **Enforcing Ohio’s Citizenship Requirement**

Second, the Supreme Court of the United States granted last week a request by Arizona’s Republican legislative leaders and the Republican National Committee to reinstate a law requiring proof of citizenship to register to vote. The court’s decision limits the application of the law only to voter registration forms prescribed by the state, but this ruling effectively gives the Ohio General Assembly the option to adopt a similar requirement. I recommend that we do so. As the prescriptive authority for election-related forms in Ohio, I ask that you consider codifying a proof of citizenship requirement that can be incorporated into the state-issued voter registration applications prescribed by my office. I also propose the addition of a clearly disclaimed warning that states: “The Ohio Constitution prohibits a noncitizen of the United States from registering and voting at any state or local election held in this state. It is illegal for a noncitizen to register and vote in Ohio.” Unfortunately, the court’s order does not preclude use of a longstanding federally-prescribed voter registration form that does not require proof of citizenship, so this remedy is not infallible; however, any incremental step we can take in the adoption of election integrity safeguards is a step worth taking. Upon the General Assembly’s action, I will immediately require front-end citizenship verification for all state-prescribed forms, and I will

direct all boards of elections to add additional steps to check citizenship status for registrants using the federally-prescribed form.

My office just conducted the most comprehensive citizenship verification audit ever performed on Ohio's voter rolls. We have expanded our review of citizenship records provided by the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles and obtained access to the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) database, which allows government agencies to check citizenship status more effectively. We are working to implement more extensive cross-checks of Social Security Administration records, federal jury pool data, and citizenship records maintained by the justice system. Additionally, my office has asked the Biden-Harris administration to grant access to the Person Centric Query System (PCQS) database, the Person Centric Identity Services database, and the Central Index System 2, also maintained by DHS. I am currently preparing to take legal action to compel the administration to follow the law and make these resources available as our requests continue to go unanswered. Our latest investigation resulted in the recent referral of 597 individuals who registered to vote in Ohio despite not being citizens of the United States, including evidence that 138 of those registrants also cast a ballot. Our citizenship audit is ongoing as we acquire new data. Adopting a proof-of-citizenship requirement on the front end of the registration process would help to reduce our current reliance on these back-end election integrity efforts.

### **Ensuring the Accuracy of Ohio's Voter Rolls**

Finally, I ask that the General Assembly consider codifying a new provisional voting requirement for individuals who provide inaccurate information on a voter registration application. The DATA Act, which became law in 2023, gave my office the authority to conduct more extensive audits and analysis of election data. In compliance with state law, our Office of Data Analytics and Archives has identified numerous voter registration applications containing mismatched data, which differs from information on file with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles or the Social Security Administration (BMV/SSA).

These mismatched voter registration applications are flagged and sent to the relevant county board of elections, which then sends the voter a notice asking that the mismatched information be corrected. If the voter fails to respond and engages in no voter-initiated activity for a specified period, the registration is removed from the rolls. The problem here is what happens when a voter with a mismatched registration record *does* engage in voter-initiated activity while the record is under review. Current law requires that a voter in confirmation status be returned to "active" status upon engaging in a voter-initiated activity, meaning the mismatched record never gets corrected. This leads to inaccurate data on Ohio's voter rolls and erodes public confidence in the integrity of our elections. Further, it complicates our statutory requirement "to ensure that the accuracy of the statewide voter registration database is maintained on a regular basis in accordance with applicable state and federal law" and prevents us from ensuring that individuals who are not eligible to vote are promptly removed from the database. (*See* R.C. 3503.151)

As Ohio's chief election official, I propose adding a statutory mandate that any voter whose registration requires the reconciliation of mismatched data be required to cast a provisional ballot. This forces the voter to cure any mismatched information before a ballot can be counted.

To be clear, the voter registration would not be canceled but rather placed in a “provisional confirmation” status for further action. This approach mirrors current law regarding an unverified voter address. The board of elections sends an acknowledgment notice to new registrants confirming the registration and assigning a voting location. If the notice is returned by USPS as undeliverable, the board must place the registration in confirmation status, and the voter must either correct the mismatched information on file or cast a provisional ballot and correct the information through the cure process. The provisional confirmation status would follow a similar process. This change is essential to maintaining the accuracy of our voter rolls and ensuring the integrity of our elections.

Thank you for the vital role you play in ensuring that Ohio elections are secure, accurate, and accessible. While it may be unrealistic to accomplish these reforms before the upcoming election, they are nonetheless changes that should be considered as soon as possible. In the meantime, as we hope for legislative action as quickly as practicable, we will work with the boards of elections to mitigate each of these concerns to the best of our ability within the current authorities given to us by the Revised Code and the Ohio Constitution. As always, I stand ready to assist you in any way with enactment of these reforms. Consider my office a resource as we continue to build on Ohio’s national reputation as “the gold standard” of election administration.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose  
Ohio Secretary of State

cc: John Barron, Chief of Staff, Ohio Senate  
Matt Oyster, Chief Legal Counsel, Ohio Senate  
Brittney Colvin, Chief of Staff, Ohio House of Representatives  
Heather Blessing, Deputy Chief Legal Counsel, Ohio House of Representatives





## **DIRECTIVE 2020-16**

August 12, 2020

To: All County Boards of Elections  
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: The Use of Drop Boxes and Additional Instructions for Curbside Voting

### **SUMMARY**

This Directive provides instructions on the continuing use of a secure drop box at each board of elections, and on curbside voting.

### **DROP BOXES**

On March 25, 2020, the Ohio General Assembly passed H.B. 197. Governor DeWine signed H.B. 197 into law on March 27, 2020. The legislation contained many provisions concerning Ohio's response to COVID-19, including changes to the 2020 Primary Election. Those changes related to the 2020 Primary Election were temporary, uncodified law and do not appear in the Ohio Revised Code.

Specifically, H.B. 197 required boards to have a secure receptacle outside the office for the return of ballots.<sup>1</sup> As such, each board of elections procured and installed a secure receptacle outside of their offices. This directive requires the continuing use of that secure receptacle for the return of ballots and expands its use to include absentee ballot application forms. The drop box must be monitored 24/7, and at least one Republican and one Democratic member of the board or board staff must together retrieve the drop box's contents at least once daily. Boards of elections must also retrieve the contents at noon on October 31, 2020 and 7:30 p.m. on November 3, 2020.

Boards of elections must continue to use the drop box that was installed outside each board of elections pursuant to H.B. 197 for the 2020 Primary Election for the November 3, 2020 election cycle for the return of absentee ballot applications and ballots. Beginning September 1, 2020, boards of elections must begin to provide voters with 24/7 access to the drop box, which will of course, already be securely monitored. Boards of elections are prohibited from installing a drop box at any other location other than the board of elections.

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<sup>1</sup> H.B. 197, Section 32(E)(1).

## **CURBSIDE VOTING**

As stated in [Directive 2020-11](#), boards of elections must offer curbside voting to any voter who is physically unable to enter a polling location. Boards should also consider placing signage outside the polling location setting forth the process for curbside voting and how to contact someone inside the polling location for assistance. Boards should consider developing specific parking or clearly marked spots for curbside voting and having bipartisan precinct election officials or volunteers dedicated to continuously monitoring the parking lot, parking spaces, and chosen method of communication, whether that is a designated telephone number or other notification system that voters will use to contact election officials.

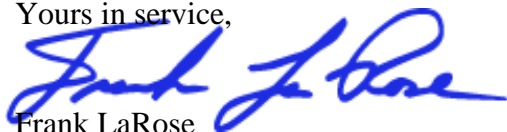
Precinct election officials and election officials must follow the procedures set forth in [Election Official Manual Chapter 7, Section 1.04](#) and the [Ohio Secretary of State Health Guidance for Boards of Elections](#). Additionally, boards of elections must consider the following procedures for curbside voting:

- In addition to the personal protective equipment protocols outlined in the Ohio Secretary of State Health Guidance for Board of Elections, wearing gloves during the *assembly* of voting materials that will be used during the curbside voting transaction prior to delivering the voting material to the voter;
- Offering and asking the voter to utilize hand sanitizer before and after the voting transaction and to wear a mask prior to and throughout the voting transaction;
- Direct voters to only open the car window as much as is necessary to communicate with the precinct election official and to pass back their ballot or other necessary materials;
- Require the precinct election officials or election officials to remain six feet away from the voter and vehicle until necessary to deliver and collect materials; and
- Properly disposing of the precinct election officials' or election officials' personal protective equipment and gloves.

Any voter that is in line to vote curbside by 7:30 p.m. on November 3, 2020 must be permitted to vote.

If you have any questions concerning this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State's elections counsel at (614) 728-8789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose  
Ohio Secretary of State



## **DIRECTIVE 2020-22**

October 5, 2020

To: All County Boards of Elections  
Board Members, Directors, and Deputy Directors

Re: Directive 2020-16; The Use of Secure Receptacles Outside of the Boards of Elections; Litigation; and the Use of Election Officials to Receive Absentee Ballots Outside the Boards of Elections

### **SUMMARY**

This Directive clarifies [Directive 2020-16](#) and the use of secure receptacles, commonly known as “drop boxes,” outside the board of elections; provides an overview of relevant litigation; and sets forth instructions on the use of election officials for the return of absentee ballots outside the board of elections.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **I. CLARIFICATION OF DIRECTIVE 2020-16 AND SECURE RECEPTACLES AND OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT LITIGATION**

##### **A. OVERVIEW AND CLARIFICATION OF DIRECTIVE 2020-16**

On March 25, 2020, the Ohio General Assembly passed H.B. 197. Governor DeWine signed H.B. 197 into law on March 27, 2020. The legislation contained many provisions concerning Ohio’s response to COVID-19, including changes to the 2020 Primary Election. Those changes related to the 2020 Primary Election were temporary, uncoded law and do not appear in the Ohio Revised Code. In addition to other temporary changes to election law, H.B. 197 explicitly required boards to have a “secure receptacle” outside the office of each board of elections as an alternate means for the return of absentee ballots in the 2020 Primary Election.<sup>1</sup>

On August 12, 2020, my Office issued [Directive 2020-16](#). Directive 2020-16 is based on the express language and legislative intent behind H.B. 197 and the express language of [R.C. 3509.05\(A\)](#), the latter of which provides that absentee voters may return their absentee ballots by mail or by personally delivering<sup>2</sup> their ballots “to the director” of their county board of elections.

<sup>1</sup> H.B. 197, Section 32(E)(1).

<sup>2</sup> An absentee voter may also have certain designated relatives deliver the voter’s ballot “to the director.” See [R.C. 3509.05\(A\)](#) (“spouse of the elector, the father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather,

R.C. 3509.05(A) states that those are the only two methods by which absentee ballots can be returned “to the director” and that absentee ballots “shall be transmitted to the director in no other manner, . . .” In each county, the director of the board of elections maintains their office at the county board of elections.

While H.B. 197 required each county board of elections to procure and install a “secure receptacle” outside each board’s office for the return of absentee ballots in the conclusion of the 2020 Primary Election, H.B. 197 did not amend R.C. 3509.05 to require the continued use of the secure receptacle (otherwise known as a “drop box”) in the 2020 General Election. Because those secure receptacles were installed outside the office of each board of elections where the director has their office, my Office instructed the boards of elections in Directive 2020-16 that the secure receptacle each county installed for the Primary Election must also be used for the return of absentee ballots in the 2020 General Election.

In Directive 2020-16 my Office also expanded the use of secure receptacles to permit voters to deposit absentee ballot *applications* and voter registration forms in the secure receptacle. Directive 2020-16 also required boards, beginning September 1, 2020, to provide voters with 24/7 access to the secure receptacle. It also stated that the secure receptacle outside of the board of elections must be monitored 24/7, and at least one Republican and one Democratic member of the board or board staff must together retrieve the secure receptacle’s contents at least once daily. Boards of elections must also retrieve the contents at noon on October 31, 2020 and at 7:30 p.m. on November 3, 2020. The board must mark or personally monitor the last voter in line at 7:30 p.m. for the secure receptacle in order to allow voters who are in line at 7:30 p.m. for the secure receptacle to drop off their ballot.

Directive 2020-16 prohibits boards from installing a secure receptacle at any location other than outside the board of elections because R.C. 3509.05(A) states that if the voter elects *not* to return their ballot by mail, then the voter must personally deliver their ballot “to the director.” The director maintains their office at the board of elections. Moreover, as stated above, H.B. 197 required each board of elections to install a secure receptacle *outside the office of the board of elections*. As such, based on my Office’s interpretation of current permanent law and the express language and legislative intent behind the temporary law, a voter who opts to personally deliver their absentee ballot to the board of elections, as opposed to mailing their absentee ballot to the board of elections, must return their absentee ballots to the office of the board of elections.

To be clear, Directive 2020-16, never prohibited and does not prohibit a board of elections from installing more than one secure receptacle *outside the office of the board of elections*. If a majority of the board members vote to install additional secure receptacles outside the office of the board of elections, the same requirements set forth above apply to each additional secure receptacle installed outside the board of elections. Additionally, boards of elections must check the secure receptacle(s) as many times a day as necessary to ensure that it does not become over-filled and unusable.

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grandmother, brother, or sister of the whole or half blood, or the son, daughter, adopting parent, adopted child, stepparent, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece of the elector”).

Ohio law prohibits any person from “loiter[ing], congregat[ing], or engag[ing] in any kind of election campaigning within the area between the polling place and the small flags of the United States placed on the thoroughfares and walkways leading to the polling place, and if the line of electors waiting to vote extends beyond those small flags, within ten feet of any elector in that line.”<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Ohio law prohibits any person from “hinder[ing] or delay[ing] an elector [from] reaching or leaving the place fixed for casting the elector’s ballot.”<sup>4</sup> These same prohibitions against loitering and congregating and against hindering or delaying an elector from reaching or leaving the place fixed for casting their ballot apply to any secure receptacle installed outside the board of elections.

## **B. OHIO DEMOCRATIC PARTY V. LAROSE<sup>5</sup>**

Directive 2020-16 and the underlying interpretation of R.C. 3509.05 upon which we based Directive 2020-16 were challenged in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas. The trial court ruled in favor of Plaintiffs’ alternative interpretation of R.C. 3509.05 and preliminarily enjoined the requirement in Directive 2020-16 that secure receptacles must be located only outside the board of elections. My Office previously notified boards of elections that the injunction was stayed pending the outcome of the appeal of the trial court’s ruling.

On Friday, October 2, 2020, the Tenth District Court of Appeals<sup>6</sup> reversed that injunction, meaning that Directive 2020-16 is still in effect. The Court’s majority opinion also ruled in favor of the defendant that Directive 2020-16 is not in violation of Ohio law.

## **II. ELECTION OFFICIALS RECEIVING ABSENTEE BALLOTS OUTSIDE THE BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

Similarly, Directive 2020-16 does not prohibit a board of elections from having permanent<sup>7</sup> or temporary board employees who have undergone a criminal background check (hereinafter, collectively referred to as “board employees”) collect absentee ballots outside the office of the board of elections from electors personally delivering<sup>8</sup> their absentee ballots to the board. Boards of elections, by a vote of a majority of the board’s members, may have board employees collect absentee ballots outside of the office of the board of elections in addition to the secure receptacle(s) that are available 24 hours a day. If a majority of the board members vote to have board employees receive absentee ballots outside the office of the board of elections from electors who opt to

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<sup>3</sup> [R.C. 3501.35\(A\)\(1\)](#).

<sup>4</sup> [R.C. 3501.35\(A\)\(2\)](#).

<sup>5</sup> *Ohio Democratic Party v. LaRose*, Franklin C.P. No. 20CV-5634 (Sept. 16, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> *Ohio Democratic Party v. LaRose*, 10th Dist. Franklin No. 20AP-432.

<sup>7</sup> All permanent board of elections employees are required to have a criminal background check conducted. See [Election Official Manual Chapter 2](#), page 11.

<sup>8</sup> Again, an absentee voter may also have certain designated relatives deliver the voter’s ballot “to the director.” See [R.C. 3509.05\(A\)](#) (“spouse of the elector, the father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, brother, or sister of the whole or half blood, or the son, daughter, adopting parent, adopted child, stepparent, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece of the elector.”).

personally deliver their ballots to the board, then the board's plan must meet the following requirements:

- (1) At least one Republican and one Democrat board employee must be paired together and trained to receive absentee ballots outside the board of elections from electors who opt to personally deliver their ballots to the board;
- (2) The board of elections must follow the [Ohio Secretary of State's Health Guidance for Boards of Elections](#) and equip the bipartisan board employees with personal protective equipment;
- (3) The board must have enough additional staff to also continue the successful operation of all other duties at the board of elections;
- (4) The board must provide the bipartisan team with a secure container in to which the bipartisan team will place the delivered absentee ballots and to maintain the secure and bipartisan chain of custody of such delivered absentee ballots from outside the board of elections to inside of the board of elections;
- (5) The board must secure the ballots in a dual locked room once inside the board of elections;<sup>9</sup>
- (6) The board, by a majority vote of its members, must vote to set the schedule during which bipartisan teams of board employees will receive absentee ballots outside the office of the board of elections and publicize it throughout the county. That staffed collection schedule may begin when early, in-person voting begins on October 6 and may be whatever the board determines to be necessary in the county through 7:30 p.m. on Election Day, November 3, 2020;
- (7) The board must work with the board's law enforcement point of contact to ensure that there is appropriate traffic control and appropriate signage outside the board of elections instructing voters on where to park or drive up to return absentee ballots; and
- (8) The bipartisan team of board employees must remind any elector returning more than one ballot that only the elector themselves or a near relative<sup>10</sup> of the elector may personally deliver an absentee ballot to the board of elections.

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<sup>9</sup> Access to ballots and election data media must be restricted to authorized personnel only. These items should be segregated and stored in a separate, locked room or storage unit (e.g. cabinet) designated for that purpose. As with voting equipment, ballots and election data media must be locked under a dual-control lock system. See [Election Official Manual Chapter 2](#), page 73.

<sup>10</sup> [R.C. 3509.05\(A\)](#) ("the spouse of the elector, the father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, grandfather, grandmother, brother, or sister of the whole or half blood, or the son, daughter, adopting parent, adopted child, stepparent, stepchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, or niece of the elector.")



Thank you again for all that you have done and are doing to prepare for the November 3, 2020 General Election. If you have any questions concerning this Directive, please contact the Secretary of State's elections counsel at (614) 728-8789.

Yours in service,



Frank LaRose  
Ohio Secretary of State

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