Interested Party Testimony
Ken Terry on behalf of the Ohio Association of Elections Officials
SB 238

Chairman Dovilla and the members of the House Policy and Legislative Oversight Committee,

My name is Ken Terry, I am the Director of the Allen County Board of Elections and have been with the Board of Elections for almost 6 years. I am also the co-chair of the Ohio Association of Elections Officials Legislative Committee. I am here today to give interested party testimony to help clarify the mechanics of ballots cast during the period between the beginning of absentee voting and the end of voter registration commonly referred to as “Golden Week”.

The overlap of these two individual processes has existed for years, however the elimination of a required reason to vote absentee and the dramatic expansion of absentee utilization starting in 2008 has exacerbated potential issues with golden week.

Currently, the process for handling golden week ballots and registrations is driven by directive and can change at any time with the issuance of another directive. The most recent directive is 2012-36 which is the process I am going to clarify.

When a voter who is not registered, or needs to update their registration wishes to vote absentee in person during golden week they are first required to complete a voter registration form. Once the form is complete a staff member immediately enters the information into the Voter Registration Database so that a ballot may be issued.

A standard absentee ballot and ID envelope is issued and the voter votes the ballot as normal. After the ballot is sealed in the ID envelope, it is segregated from other absentee ballots until the registration is confirmed. If a county uses DRE voting machines the ballots are coded so that they may be excluded from a tally when the
votes are uploaded from the DRE to the central tabulating system in
the event the ballot is not eligible to be counted.

On the same day the golden week voter votes their ballot an
"Acknowledgment Card" is sent via non-forwardable mail to the
address the voter provided.

The "Acknowledgment Card" is a standard procedure which verifies the
address provided by the voter. This card informs the voter of their
precinct and poll and serves as verification since it is non-forwardable.

If the "Acknowledgement Card" is not returned as undeliverable by the
10th day before Election Day the ballot is processed and tabulated with
other absentee ballots.

If the "Acknowledgement Card" is returned as undeliverable the ballot
is considered challenged and a "Confirmation Card" is immediately
sent via forwardable mail to the voter.

The "Confirmation Card" is also a standard procedure which is used
whenever there is an indication that the voter may have moved or
there is another issue with the voter's registration record.

Normally, if an "Acknowledgement Card" is returned undeliverable the
voter is required to vote provisionally in the next election they wish to
vote in order to confirm their information and any voter who is sent a
"Confirmation Card" is required to confirm their information to the poll
worker the next time they wish to vote.

If the "Confirmation Card" of a golden week voter is returned
confirming the address provided at the time of registration the ballot is
considered valid and processed accordingly. If the "Confirmation
Card" of the golden week voter is not returned by the 10th day following the election the Board of Elections, by majority vote, must determine whether the ballot should be counted.

This concludes my testimony and I would be happy answer any questions at this time.