October 24, 2013

The Honorable Keith Faber
President, Ohio Senate
Statehouse, Room 202
Columbus, Ohio 43215

The Honorable Bill Batchelder
Speaker, Ohio House of Representatives
77 S. High Street, 14th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Senate President Faber and Speaker Batchelder,

Currently, both chambers of the Ohio legislature are considering various bills that impact the conduct of elections in Ohio. As Ohio’s chief election official, I write to encourage you to address the following priority areas as we continue our collective work to improve our system of elections:

1) Uniform hours for in-person absentee voting – Since taking office I have been encouraging the legislature to pass a bill that standardizes the days and hours for early voting across the 88 counties. Achieving uniformity in hours on a bipartisan basis is an important step forward to ensuring fairness for all Ohio voters, giving them the same access to the ballot. As it stands now, the only bipartisan proposal for uniform days and hours is a plan put forth by the Ohio Association of Election Officials (OAE). I urge you to use the OAE recommendations as a basis for passing a bipartisan plan:
   a) For presidential general elections in-person absentee voting ends at 5:00 pm the Sunday before the election with the following voting hours the Saturday and Sunday before Election Day: Saturday 8:00 am to 2:00 pm and Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm.
   b) For gubernatorial general elections in-person absentee voting ends at 4:00 pm the Saturday before the election with the last Saturday having voting hours from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.
   c) For odd-year general elections, all special elections and all primary elections early in-person absentee voting ends at noon the Saturday before the election with the last Saturday having voting hours from 8:00 am to noon.

2) Online voter registration – I am reiterating my call for the legislature to pass a bill allowing online voter registration in Ohio. It is past time to bring this innovation to Ohio in order to improve the security and integrity of Ohio’s election system and realize the cost savings that other states have by streamlining the registration process. Online voter registration truly makes it easy to vote and hard to cheat. Like the issue of
uniform days and hours, this is an election issue where I believe we can find bipartisan agreement. As you know, there are two bills currently pending in the legislature – one sponsored by Senator LaRose and another by Representative Stinziano. I once again urge debate and passage of an online voter registration measure or an amendment to another elections bill.

3) **Minor party ballot access** – As you know, Ohio has been without a constitutional minor party law. I have consistently advocated for legislative action, so that I have the guidance necessary to administer laws as they relate to minor parties. Enactment of a constitutional measure no later than October 31 will give my office adequate time to administer the new law, rather than issue temporary instructions leading up to next year’s elections.

As you move forward with additional election reforms, I respectfully ask you to prioritize these three important reforms. Please contact my staff or me with any questions or concerns regarding these or any further matters. Thank you for your important work on behalf of all Ohioans.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jon Husted
Ohio Secretary of State