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Article published December 15, 2005

## Ohio election bill hits roadblock Campaign-finance portion delays measure

By **JIM PROVANCE**  
**BLADE COLUMBUS BUREAU**

COLUMBUS - A controversial bill requiring voters to show proof of identification ran into a roadblock yesterday as some House Republicans balked at a provision limiting how much local government workers may contribute to their bosses' campaigns.

"It saddens me, frankly, that this is the only issue within this deplorable piece of legislation that Republicans have found time to object over," House Democratic Leader Chris Redfern (D., Catawba Island) said.

With no Democrat votes expected, the Republican-controlled General Assembly abandoned plans to send the bill to Gov. Bob Taft before recessing for the holidays last night.

The measure will be back on the table when the chambers return in January, giving the opposition more than two weeks to marshal its forces to a bill Republicans have characterized as anti-voter fraud but Democrats have called anti-voter.

The House and Senate, however, did send Mr. Taft bills last night giving law enforcement controversial new tools to investigate and prevent terrorism, and to spell out how the state will spend \$500 million for biotech and medical research approved by voters in November.

Current law prohibits county and municipal elected officials from soliciting campaign contributions from their employees, but nothing prevents them from accepting unsolicited contributions in any amount.

One of dozens of provisions inserted into the election bill by the Republican-controlled Senate would have capped at \$200 per four-year term how much a locally elected official could accept from an employee.

"I cannot accept a contribution from a member of my staff," Sen. Kevin Coughlin (R., Cuyahoga Falls) said. "I see

no reason why a mayor, a county commissioner, or any other local government official should be under any different rule."

Originally, language pushed by Sen. Jeff Jacobson (R., Vandalia) would have extended the outright ban on state officials accepting contributions from state employees to local officials.

But Sen. Randy Gardner (R., Bowling Green), an opponent of the ban, offered the \$200 cap as a successful compromise in that chamber. It was greeted warmly by the House Republican caucus.

Under House Bill 3, voters would have to show a photo ID, such as a driver's license, or a utility bill, government check, paycheck, bank statement, or some other document displaying the voter's name and address before being allowed to enter the voting booth.

Failing that, the voter could provide the last four digits of his Social Security number or sign an affidavit under the penalty of perjury to get a provisional ballot that would be counted only after the information checks out.

The bill would also make it tougher for issues to reach the ballot and would repeal a recent mandate that computerized, touch-screen voting machines be audited within two months after an election as another check on their accuracy.

In another vote that crossed party lines, the House voted 69-23 for what has been characterized as Ohio's version of the federal Patriot Act. The Senate later voted 29-2 to forward it to the governor.

"Why not act?" asked Rep. Steve Reinhard (R., Bucyrus). "Why not put our state on the front lines of fighting terrorism?"

Among other provisions, the bill would allow police to demand the name, address, and date of birth of anyone suspected of a felony or believed to be a witness to a felony. The provision mirrors a Nevada law that has been upheld as constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court.

"I applaud efforts to go after terrorists, but let's not hurt the good guys in the process," said Rep. Ron Hood (R., Ashville). "I don't want to see these Gestapo tactics get a foothold in the United States, let alone here in Ohio."

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