

LWV Ohio Statehouse Day – March 19, 2013

LWVO Lobbyist Report

Election Law

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The House of Representatives is letting the Senate take the lead on introducing election law bills in this session of the legislature.

So far, there are three election bills under consideration:

Senate Bill 10 (Coley–R, Butler County, and Smith-D, Cuyahoga County) addresses access to polling places for voters with disabilities, voters who are in line at early voting sites, and journalists. League supported it, as introduced, in testimony and a news release.

Senate Bill 20 (Turner-D, Cuyahoga County) a humongous (300 page) bill that covers too many topics to summarize, going into detail about a lot of important minutia of administering elections. Some of it the League can support, while some cause us concerns. However, it may not get far, because the chief sponsor and all eight cosponsors are Democrats, who are outnumbered 2-1 in the Senate. This means that the League may not have an opportunity to testify.

Senate Bill 47 (Seitz-R, Hamilton County) SB 47 would restrict petition signature-gathering days, permit circulation of petitions by people who are not state residents, disallow simultaneous signing of petitions and voter registration, and impose burdensome bureaucratic rules for filing petitions. The shortening of signature days would mean that once petitions are submitted, the proponents could not continue to gather signatures while the number of valid signatures are determined, as occurred in connection with Issue 2, and would have only ten additional days if the number of valid signatures is insufficient. In addition, supplemental signatures would have to be submitted on an entirely different form.

Not surprisingly, the League testified on the bill, but did not support it.

SB 47 was passed by the Senate and is currently pending in the House.

There is always the possibility that additional amendments to these bills will introduce matters of concern to the League. Stay tuned for what happens when and if any of these bills reach the House.

We also expect additional bills to be introduced soon.