

Testimony on SB 380
Before the Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Affairs Committee
The Honorable G. Cates, Chair
Presented by Peg Rosenfield on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Ohio
December 4, 2008

The League of Women Voters of Ohio has a long history of supporting election-administration reform in order to ensure that every eligible Ohio voter can vote and every valid Ohio vote is counted.

There are a number of issues that need to be addressed in Ohio's election statutes. SB 380 is a hurried attempt to address issues that did not pose a threat to the integrity of the 2008 general election and that should be addressed next year when they can be given careful consideration, with ample opportunity for comment by boards of elections, advocates, and members of the public. Experience has shown that legislation that has been rushed through leads to unintended consequences—including expensive lawsuits, last-minute emergency directives from the Secretary of State and perhaps most important, sending a message of fear to Ohioans that our election system was fraught with fraud. These are significant problems that should be avoided.

On December 2, the Ohio Secretary of State convened more than 300 experts, election officials, and concerned citizens to begin an in-depth consideration of a wide range of election concerns—and possible solutions to them. A recurring theme, voiced by a variety of stakeholders from election officials to academics to interested citizens, was that the merits of any proposed change need to be thoroughly explored and input collected from a wide range of interested parties. To that end, the League of Women Voters of Ohio urges you to wait until next year to provide the needed time for careful review of all areas of reform.

Thank you for the opportunity to share the concerns of the League of Women Voters of Ohio. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

The LWV is