



OEA Legislative Watch

July 19, 2011

Do you know that the political process affects virtually everything in your school day?

Take action —
Become an OEA Member Lobbyist

Questions?

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Review of Recent Election Bills: Provisions in HB 194 & 159 Make It Harder to Vote

House Bill 194 (R-Mecklenborg): This bill makes harmful changes to Ohio election law by making it more difficult for citizens to cast a ballot. By limiting access to voting and making it more difficult for voters to express their views, this legislation is designed to benefit one party's voters and to exclude others. The OEA opposed HB 194, which passed both the House and Senate on a party line vote; Republicans voting for the bill and Democrats against. The bill was signed by the Governor Kasich on July 1, 2011 and is effective September 30, 2011. However, efforts are underway by a group called "Fair Elections Ohio" to collect signatures to have harmful parts of the bill subject to a referendum on the November 2012 ballot. The OEA encourages members to sign petitions to repeal harmful sections of HB 194. In part, HB 194 will do the following:

- Reduce time periods for absentee voting by mail and in person absentee voting
- Ban in person absentee voting on Sundays and every Saturday after the noon hour
- Ban in person early voting during the last weekend before the election
- No longer require poll workers to assist voters by directing them to the correct voting precinct
- Stop local Election Boards from sending absentee ballot applications unsolicited to all eligible voters
- Stop local Election Boards from paying postage on return absentee ballot requests or on the return of absentee ballots
- Make it more difficult for Election Boards to open extra offices in the community to make it more convenient to vote early
- Increase the amount of people voting in person on Election Day, bringing back the long lines of 2004 and the potential of multiple hour waits for Ohioans to exercise their Constitutional rights to vote
- Allow for more restrictive voter ID requirements in the future by providing that the provisions of HB 159 (photo ID requirement, not yet passed) prevail over any conflicting provision of HB 194

House Bill 159 (R-Mecklenborg): This bill would require voters to provide a state-issued photo ID in order to vote in person. It has been widely criticized by labor, minority groups, government oversight groups and others. The OEA testified against the bill, which passed the House on a mostly party-line vote, but has not yet passed out of the Senate. The Senate amended the bill to allow providing a Social Security number as an alternative and providing a free photo ID to those that do not have one (by request every four years). The bill is opposed by Secretary of State John Husted. Go to <http://aces.ohea.org> to contact your legislators and urge them to oppose HB 159.

House Bill 86 Expands Earned Credits for Program Participation by Prisoners

House Bill 86 (R-Blessing; D-Heard) has been passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor. It is effective September 30, 2011. The bill allows prisoners of the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections to earn one or five days of provisional earned credit towards early release, depending on the seriousness of the offense(s) for which they are incarcerated. Many offenses, including sexually-oriented offenses, are not eligible. Earned credit is accumulated through productive participation in specified prison programs or activities. Many of these programs are provided by OEA members in the State Council of Professional Educators (SCOPE). The OEA supports the earned credit provisions in HB 86.

DRC may deny some or all of the provisional earned credit days if it determines that the prisoner assaulted any other inmate, DRC staff, or prison visitor or committed any major violation of prison rules. The total number of days of earned credit a prisoner may provisionally or finally earn under the mechanism cannot exceed 8% of the total number of days in the prisoner's stated prison term. The types of programs that may be available for earning days of credit are limited to education, vocational training, prison industry employment, substance abuse treatment, and other "constructive programs" developed by DRC.