Elections

S.B. 293

Primary Sponsors: Sens. Gavarone and Brenner

Effective date: March 20, 2026

Absentee ballot deadline

- Requires all regular absentee ballots that are returned by mail to be delivered to the appropriate board of elections by the close of the polls (7:30 p.m.) on Election Day to be counted, eliminating a four-day grace period for those ballots under prior law.

Electors' U.S. citizenship

- Changes the process the Secretary of State (SOS) must use to review the Statewide Voter Registration Database to identify non-U.S. citizens.
- Requires the SOS, at least monthly, to consult the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) database and the federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) database operated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- Requires the boards of elections promptly to cancel the registration of each person identified as a noncitizen and requires the SOS's Election Integrity Unit to conduct a further investigation regarding the person.
- Changes the procedure for the precinct election officials to challenge a person as a noncitizen when the person appears to vote in person.
- Requires the election officials to challenge a person who presents photo ID at the polls in the form of an Ohio driver's license or state ID card (Ohio DL/ID) with a "noncitizen" notation.
- Requires any person who is challenged on the basis of citizenship to either (1) provide proof of citizenship, declare the person's citizenship under oath, and cast a regular ballot, or (2) cast a provisional ballot and provide proof of citizenship to the board by the fourth day after Election Day.

Voter roll maintenance, other than for citizenship purposes

- Requires the SOS to provide information to the boards of elections that identifies each voter registration record in which the date of birth, the Ohio DL/ID number, or the last four digits of the elector's Social Security number (SSN-4) does not match the information in the BMV database or the database of the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA).
- Requires the board of elections to send the elector a confirmation notice and requires the elector to cast a provisional ballot the next time the elector votes, unless the elector provides corrected information to the board before the elector next votes.

- Requires the SOS to generate monthly reports of electors who have died based on information from the SSA database, SAVE, and the State and Territorial Exchange of Vital Events (STEVE), in addition to the Ohio Department of Health as under prior law.
- Requires a board of elections to cancel a voter registration if the board determines that the elector is a fictitious person or that the registration is a duplicate.
- Requires a board of elections that cancels a voter registration for any reason to send a notice to the elector's residence address and, if the cancelation was made in error, to restore it and treat it as though it were never canceled.

Ohio Election Integrity Commission

- Makes changes to the qualifications to serve as a member of the Ohio Election Integrity Commission, which is to replace the Ohio Elections Commission as of January 1, 2026.