



**Senator Mark Wagoner**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Ohio Senate District**

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**SENATOR WAGONER INTRODUCES ELECTION REFORM LEGISLATION**

*COLUMBUS*— State Senator Mark Wagoner (R- Toledo) introduced comprehensive election reform legislation today designed to modernize and improve the overall operation of Ohio elections and build voter confidence in the results.

The bill includes recommendations made by Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted, including the creation of an online voter registration system, improvements to the provisional balloting process, the development of a more accurate statewide voter database and the adoption of uniform statewide early voting standards.

“The eyes of the world will once again be on Ohio’s voting process in the upcoming presidential election,” said Senator Wagoner. “It’s important that we move quickly to adopt these reforms so the voting process can be as effective and accurate as possible. I’m honored to work with Secretary Husted on this effort to improve not only the performance of the entire election system but also the confidence of every Ohioan in the outcome of each election.”

Senator Wagoner’s bill would do the following:

- **Online Voter Registration and Change of Address:** The bill would create a system for online voter registration, which would also allow registered voters to make residential address changes electronically. According to an informal survey of Ohio’s 88 county boards of elections, nearly half of provisional ballots cast in the last general election were due to changes in a voter’s name or address that were not properly made with the county board of elections. To protect against fraudulent registrations, the online system would require a valid Ohio driver’s license or state identification card to participate.
- **Improving Casting & Counting of Provisional Ballots:** The bill would clarify the process for casting and counting provisional ballots, which are required under federal law in the event of a question about a voter’s identifying information. Of the 105,000 provisional ballots cast in the 2010 general election, 90 percent were counted. Nearly half of the remaining 10 percent were not counted because these individuals were not eligible Ohio voters, but the other five percent often result in confusion and controversy due to voters attempting to cast a ballot in the wrong polling location. The bill is designed to reduce errors in the voting process, specifically by adopting new technology that would

help voters and poll workers identify correct voting locations. Voters would also be required to provide all nine digits of their Social Security number (rather than the last four digits under existing law) to better assist boards of elections in verifying the validity of a ballot.

- **More Accurate Statewide Voter Database:** The bill would give the Secretary of State authority to develop and enhance a more centralized Statewide Voter Database to easily crosscheck voter information files against the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, the Ohio Department of Health, Social Security death files, Ohio Department of Job & Family Services and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Corrections. This enhanced infrastructure would also allow the Secretary of State to pursue agreements for data sharing with other states to better track voters who move from one state to the other, preserving the one person - one vote principle. A number of other states are already sharing data as a way to better ensure the integrity of their voter rolls.
- **Uniform Statewide Early Voting Standards:** The bill would set the window for absentee voting at 21 days by mail and 16 days in-person prior to Election Day. All boards of elections would be required to be open on the two Saturdays within the in-person voting period and to be closed on Sundays. In order to give boards of elections time to update their poll books and voter rolls prior to Election Day, all in-person absentee voting would end the Friday before an election. Because the deadline for voter registration would remain at 30 days before the election, these new timeframes for absentee voting would effectively eliminate the so-called “Golden Week,” an unintended consequence of Ohio law, where voters have been able to register and vote on the same day. The bill would not change the voting period for military voters, which is and would remain 45 days. Additionally, county boards of elections would no longer be able to solicit absentee ballot participation by mailing applications to all voters and from paying the return postage on applications or voted ballots.

“A well-run system of elections requires the right balance between voter access and accuracy, and I believe the changes reflected in Senator Wagoner’s bill will go a long way to helping achieve that balance,” Secretary Husted said. “I appreciate the General Assembly’s willingness to help us accomplish these important reforms.”