



Press Release

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Senators Tavares and Turner Introduce Absentee Ballot Legislation *SB 227 restores local control and encourages early voting*

Columbus –State Senators Charleta Tavares (D-Columbus) and Nina Turner (D-Cleveland) have introduced legislation in the Ohio Senate to restore local control to Ohio’s elections process. If enacted, Senate Bill 227 would allow local boards of election to mail unsolicited applications for absentee ballots and require the Ohio Secretary of State to reimburse the cost of the mailings for elections in even numbered years.

“SB 227 provides a pro-democracy, pro-voter approach to our elections process,” said Senator Tavares. “This is a fundamental form of outreach to the citizen-taxpayers to remind them of the election, encourage their participation and provide a tool for them to easily, efficiently and effectively cast their ballots.”

During recent elections, Franklin and Cuyahoga counties have mailed unsolicited absentee ballot applications to encourage early voting and the result has been shorter lines on election day. However, a controversial provision of House Bill 194, recently passed by the General Assembly, would prohibit these unsolicited mailings. While HB 194 may be subject to a referendum, Senators Tavares and Turner have taken the proactive step of seeking to restore the rights of local boards of election to better serve the needs of their counties.

“Senate Bill 227 will return local control to the elections process and make it easier and more convenient for citizens to cast their vote,” said Senator Turner. “The one-size-fits-all prescriptions coming out of Columbus ignores the fact that these medicines treat each patient differently. Our bill would allow counties to tailor their policies to the needs of their local communities to maximize voter participation.”

SB 227 would also allow voters to request and return absentee ballot applications through email.