

Summary of Key Points for Press Briefing on Voter ID Requirements

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Bill Faith, Executive Director

Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO)

House Bill 3 created the most significant changes to Ohio's voting laws in three decades. COHHIO's review the rules and advisories associated with the implementation of the legislation revealed a major problem with the voter ID provision: in the process of implementing this broad sweeping election reform legislation, the Secretary of State neglected to inform the public and the county boards of elections, who carry out Ohio's elections, that a state-issued ID with a current OR former address is sufficient to cast a regular ballot. The following events and initiatives highlight COHHIO's determined efforts to bring clarity to our state's election process.

- **January 31** – The Governor signs House Bill 3 into law and files the new law with the Secretary of State, who is responsible for implementing the new law. The definitions section of 3501.01 (AA) (2) related to photo identification clearly states, “It shows the current address of the individual to whom it was issued, which shall conform to the address in the poll list or signature pollbook, except for a driver’s license or a state identification card issued under section 4507.50 of the Revised Code, which may show either the current or former address to whom it was issued, regardless of whether that address conforms to the address in the poll list or signature pollbook.”
- **June 5** – The Assistant Secretary of State, Monty Lobb, issues Advisory No. 2006-05 to all County Boards of Elections, which contains 21 pages summarizing the various statutory changes made in HB 3 under the headings of: Voter Registration, Voting, Elections Administration, State Issue Process and Other Significant Changes. Nothing in this advisory mentions that voters with a state issued ID with their former address can cast a regular ballot.
- **June 16** – In a letter to the Secretary of State, COHHIO requests clarification on the voter ID provision (enclosed).
- **June 26** – After contentious debate, the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) approves six new rules, filed by the Secretary of State, implementing numerous provisions of HB 3. Nothing in these rules mentions that voters with a state issued ID with their former address can cast a regular ballot. Under questioning by JCARR committee member Rep. Fred Strahorn about the confusion around the ID requirements, Mitzi Dunn, of the Secretary of State's office, states that there would be new rules filed to address these concerns “within the next week or so.”
- **July 3** – In a letter to COHHIO, a representative of the Secretary of State agrees with COHHIO's interpretation of the voter ID provision that a former address on a state issued ID is acceptable to vote a regular ballot (enclosed).
- **July 14** – As a result of the confusion with the ID provision, COHHIO estimates that over 1 million eligible voters who move every year could be unnecessarily required to cast a complex new provisional ballot, contrary to what is allowed under HB 3. COHHIO contacts researchers at Cleveland State University to determine the number of registered voters in Ohio that could be impacted and begins gathering data to confirm the estimate (study attached).

- **July 20 – August 1** - Knowing that County Boards of Elections are generating pollworker training materials and mailings to all registered voters, COHHIO polls 27 County Boards of Election to determine their understanding of the voter ID requirement (canvas attached).
- **July 31** – In preparation for the limited special elections taking place on August 8th in numerous local jurisdictions, pollworker training across the state begins with inaccurate information about voter ID requirements.
- **August 2** – COHHIO issues a press advisory announcing our press conference on August 3rd.
- **August 2** – At 4:50 pm, Judy Grady, Director of Elections for the Secretary of State, sends a memo to all directors and deputy directors of county boards of elections regarding ID provisions of HB 3. The memo fails to clarify that voters with a state-issued ID listing their current OR former address can cast a regular ballot .
- **August 8** - There are 27 counties with 48 ballot issues appearing on the August 8, 2006 ballot.
- **August** - County Boards of Election officials are preparing the September 8, 2006 Notice of Elections mailing to all registered voters. HB 3 requires this notice, which must include the assigned polling place and the types of identification, and which voters must bring to the polls. **A directive from the Secretary of State should require the Boards of Elections to include a statement that clarifies that a state-issued ID with a current or former address is acceptable to cast a regular ballot.**

County Boards of Election officials, civic participation groups, legislators and other involved parties have repeatedly requested clarity from the Secretary of State on voter ID requirements. The Secretary of State should immediately issue a directive to the Boards of Elections to clarify the specific types of identification required for voters to cast regular ballots. This can prevent hundreds of thousands of registered voter with perfectly legal photo identification to be forced unnecessarily into voting on complex new provisional ballots, which will increase lines at the polls, create more opportunities for confusion, and offer no assurance that the voters' ballot will ever be counted (see provisional ballot, enclosed).

We want to be clear that such a directive will in no way by itself fix all of the problems inherent in instituting the new voter ID requirements in HB 3. For example, while HB 3 states that a military ID is an acceptable form of ID at the polls, the ID *must* contain the voter's address, so in fact, a military ID will not be accepted in order to cast a regular ballot (see Ross County e-mail, enclosed).. The fact that a military ID, sufficient for entry onto military bases around the world, is not sufficient identification to vote a regular ballot in Ohio is unnecessary, bureaucratic and undemocratic public policy that can be corrected. This is something that the Secretary of State can and must fix, either by issuing a directive or calling on the legislature to clarify the law. Without this leadership, thousands of military personnel and veterans in our VA hospitals across Ohio will have to cast their votes provisionally.