

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and members of the State and local Government Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Kalesha Scott. I am a student organizer with the Ohio Student Association (OSA) under Ohio Organizing Collaborative (OOC). We advocate for 41,000 students across the state of Ohio.

I am strongly opposed to HB 680, and urge you to stop this bill and implement proactive policies that will make voting accessible to students across Ohio.

As well as being a part of OSA I too am a 2020 graduate from Central State University in Wilberforce, OH. Many of my peers were disenfranchised during the 2020 primary election.

Most of my peers were unable to vote during the 2020 primary election. More than 70% of our student body at CSU were unable to vote in the primary election due to the last minute changes and inaccessible vote by mail system. We have 95% of our student body registered to vote at their campus address. Some were unable to vote because they were unable to receive their ballot because their ballot went to the university and no one was allowed on campus whatsoever due to covid-19. I personally was unable to vote in the primary election because I did not receive my request for my ballot until the day ballots were due even though I requested my request at least a month before the deadline. Many young people did not have printers, stamps and envelopes readily available to mail in a request for an absentee ballot.

Students should be able to vote safely in person this fall or request an absentee ballot online with plenty of time to turn it back in. Students should not have to pay for stamps to exercise their right to vote. No one should have to choose between their health and exercising their right to vote. As we move toward the November general election I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on this dangerous bill that has the possibility to infringe on our basic civil rights.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I will now take any questions you may have.

Kalesha Scott
Kalesha@ohorganizing.org
Ohio Student Association