



06/02/2020

To: House State and Local Government Committee

From:
The Ohio Farmers Union

Regarding: House Bill 680 – Mail Election -Opponent Testimony

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking member Kelly and Committee Members,
We appreciate the opportunity to express our opinions regarding HB 680.

The Ohio Farmers Union represents some 3500 farm families from all across Ohio. Naturally, Most are from rural areas, where they depend heavily on the United States Postal Service for many of their communication and commence needs.

Ordinarily, Election days are special occasions in our rural communities. People relish the chance to express their opinions and perhaps to see some of their friends and neighbors in the process. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed all of that. Rural folks still want to register their votes, but they are not interested in contributing to the contamination of their communities by helping to spread this dangerous virus.

It would seem that voting-by-mail would be a natural solution to this problem . As you know, voting by mail has become the default procedure in many U.S. States, with fraudulent voting extremely rare . As you also know, many Ohio Voters have uses vote-by-mail as a convenient option for absentee voting. We thank the Ohio General Assembly and the Ohio Secretary of State for making that possible.

Sadly, HB 680 will needlessly complicate the process by prohibiting past practices of mailing absentee ballots to all Ohioans, even though this legislature has already appropriated the funding to do so.

As written, HB680 would also needlessly complicate /compress early voting by requiring mail in ballots to be cast at a single location per County, or applied for prior to October 24.

During these dangerous times, The Ohio Legislature should seek to protect the health of Ohioans, while facilitating the voting process. We believe that the Legislature must allow for input from State and Local health officials about safe and healthy voting procedures, and must assure that In-person voting locations are properly staffed with workers who are trained in health and safety procedures.



The simplest, most effective way to achieve these goals is by a vote-by-mail program. HB680 moves in a different direction that will make voting more difficult and dangerous for Ohio Voters, both rural and urban. We urge members to oppose HB680.

Thank you.

Joe Logan, President
Ohio Farmers Union