

Ohio Association of Election Officials
Legislative Committee Meeting
September 16, 2019

The legislative committee of the Ohio Association of Election Officials met on Thursday, March 7, 2019 at 10:00 AM via conference call. Tim Ward and LaVera Scott presided. Aaron Ockerman, executive director of the Ohio Association of Election Officials was also present and assisted with the lead when asked.

Peggy Byers called the roll. Present were: Penny Brooks, Luke Burton, Peggy Byers, Diana Dulebohn, Beth Goldenfield, Joyce Kale-Pesta, Sally Krisel, Tony Perlatti, Bill Rich, Brett Riffle, Lavera Scott, Deb Sneddon, John Welker, Michelle Wilcox, Mike Bridinger, Terry Burton, Kathi Creed, Charlie Hardman, Jan Kelly, Ron Knight, Renae Lentz, Mark Munroe, AJ Nowaczyk, Carla Patton, Shantiel Soeder, Tim Ward and Tonya Wichman.

Guests today were Julie Leathers, and Lisa Welch.

The minutes had been distributed by email. Jan Kelly corrected the spelling of her last name. Mike Bridinger moved we accept the minute with the correction. Mark Munroe seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Aaron spoke about the limitations of Free Conference Call. He is planning a conversation with the trustees to come up with a better method for our conference calls.

Aaron led us on the Legislative updates:

HB 49- County Identification, originally started out as a bill to add Concealed Carry only as a form of identification. Representative Greenspan has been asked to add a county identification, not just state and federal identifications to this bill. Bill Rich asked that the county identification demand a verification of the person's address when it is acquired in order for the county identification to be valid to vote. If that address is provided when the county identification is secured, the address verification would not have to accompany the county identification at the polls.

SB 191 online absentee requests, we had already endorsed this concept and the trustees had added this as a top forum for our Association for this year. Senator Theresa Gavarone is the sponsor for this bill. Aaron wanted to take our thoughts back to her. The group had a lengthy discussion about what the security requirements might be on this issue. There was some thought that this process might mirror the online voter registration process. Should there be enhanced security though? Should this process work like the UOCAVA process where the voter uses a PIN? Would the person have to have a valid email address to use a PIN? Aaron will do some research. We will talk about this topic again.

SB 194 – renaming the Board of Voting Machine examiners and expanding its reach. The discussion immediately went to the fact that Voter Registration systems would now need to be certified. A big factor was how much this would cost the county. Tony Perlatti is now on that board and he shared what the vendors had to go through to have the electronic poll books certified. They had to fulfill all the items on a matrix and go through testing labs. We left this discussion with Aaron agreeing to reach out to the Secretary of State's office to get us some more information.

Another piece SB 194 is the 10 day window for Boards of Election to act on protests to candidacy; some shared the number of protests they have just experienced with this election. Tony shared how difficult it is to get the board members back together for all of these protests. Joyce pointed out that if the prosecutor had to get involved; they are not always readily available. Bill Rich says this needs to be tied to the filing deadline for protests; not the protest itself. Bill is suggesting putting a new deadline in the Election Calendar so the protests could be bundled. There is also the added recommendation that all filings have to be 100 days ahead of the election. There was some discussion on how this would weigh in on everything. Protests for write-ins was another thought. Discussion moved to the worry of the shortened period before a presidential primary. There was some thought that the current system works. Aaron says this was the information he needed. We moved on.

The next item was the Representative Rogers bill talking about candidate vacancies. We had discussed this extensively via email and Aaron said he had the information he needed.

Next on the agenda was the subject of charter jurisdictions and how their deadlines, particularly on recalls, just do not line up with the election calendar. Sherry Poland led this discussion. This issue was attached to a bill dealing with campaign finance last year and that bill failed. Sherry wants the deadlines cleaned up. She was wondering if this might be a good time to tie the issue in to another bill. Bill Rich and LaVera mentioned the charter deadlines do not meet the UOCAVA deadlines. The deadlines were put in effect before there were the new UOCAVA deadlines and early voting. Bill and LaVera liked a 90 day deadline. Sherry was in agreement. Aaron will talk to Representative Rogers to see if this could be tied in to the vacancy bill.

SB 186 – Verified Voter Registration - Sens. Nathan Manning (R-North Ridgeville) and Vern Sykes (D-Akron) have submitted legislation that will update Ohio's voter registration process, allowing Ohioans to register and update their voter registrations automatically when they interact with state government agencies.

Voters would have the option to register with a political party at the time of their registration. What would happen when we do a party reset? There is low voter turnout in primaries anyway. Would this discourage more people from voting? The parties like this idea because it would help their party outreach. Bill Rich said that instead of people losing their party affiliation after 2 years; maybe an extension on this would be helpful. LaVera says some people might change randomly and not give the political parties what they want anyway. Tim Ward and Penny Brooks spoke openly against this. Tim's concern was that voters would randomly call in to have their party changed. This would not serve anyone's purpose and would make work for our offices. Tony Perlatti said maybe this would be a good idea on initial registrations. Beth Goldenfield says this is a situation looking for a problem as the parties have a much more sophisticated approach to identify voters anyway. Disaffiliation could be a problem if there are few primaries. Beth called it overkill. Aaron suggested he go back to the sponsor and ask for 4 years for the affiliation to drop off instead of the 2 years used now.

There was extensive discussion about the parts of this bill that would make voter registration automatic. When we get a paper registration and an electronic version of a registration; they often do not match, creating duplicates. There is no GIS system used by the BMV so we often get made-up addresses. Joyce pointed out that she had heard discussion there is going to be a computer dedicated to voter

registration in the BMV. The question was whether BMV operators would be keying the information or would it be provided solely by the voter? Aaron thought the voter was going to provide the information. Another concern was the cost of automatic registration. Would that expand our roles enough we would have to provide more precinct locations for voters who might not ever vote? After the discussion, Aaron wanted a recommendation to take to the trustees. Joyce Kale-Pesta moved a motion that we do not support SB 186. Renae Lentz seconded the motion. The motion passed.

The meeting was running long, but LaVera suggested we send out an email about the security directive to see what kind of issues counties were running in to. Tell us about your great successes also. We want to support each other in this endeavor. While some counties are nearing completion of all objectives, we are really waiting for the Secretary of State for some direction on some issues. There was some frustration that when calling the Secretary of State for specifics on the directive, counties have been directed to their county IT department. Aaron suggested we keep the Secretary of State in the loop. The SOS needs to sometimes drop the requirement or update the directive if we can't meet all of the objectives. Blue tooth for the electronic poll books is only good for 6 to 8 feet; the SOS wants us to get a router at each of the locations. The legislative committee wants to kick this item up to the trustees and let them draft a proposal on this issue. We want to comply, but here are the top 10 things from the directive that really make no sense. We need a list and present as a unit the roadblocks we are running in to. Everyone is having issues. LaVera agreed to oversee the list so it does get out of control.

Ron Knight made a motion that the group adjourn. Joyce Kale-Pesta seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Byers

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