To: Secretary of State Frank LaRose
From: Ohio Voter Rights Coalition
Date: July 21, 2021
Re: Expanded Data Collection and Policy Reform

Dear Secretary LaRose:

As a coalition of non-partisan voter advocates, we are committed to ensuring that all eligible votes are counted. Ohioans should have the freedom to vote regardless of who they are or how they choose to cast their ballots. We are seeking expansions to elections-related data collection across the state so the election process continues to improve in a comprehensive manner that values every voter's right to cast a ballot. We believe that transparent data collection and reporting is critical for bolstering public confidence in our election system. Robust data collection is needed to guide sound decisions around policy reform. Accordingly, we are requesting an updated directive instructing the BOEs on how to collect and record relevant data.

VBM

In 2020, vendor delays significantly reduced the amount of time some voters had to vote by mail. Among the counties that were impacted by vendor delays:

1. What is the average or requisite timeframe for receiving a ballot once an application is processed?
    a. Approximately how many voters received their ballots late due to vendor delays?
    b. By how many days were the mailings delayed?
    c. What was the last date that vendors were "all caught up" mailing ballots to voters?
2. If the timeline for returning a ballot is shortened, what will happen if the ballots don't get sent out to voters on time?
3. Does moving the absentee ballot request deadline to 10 days mean mailed requests need to be received by the BOE 10 days before Election Day, or postmarked by the 10th day before Election Day?
    a. For counties that have no postal centers, will their ballots be sent directly to the BOE or will they be rerouted to the nearest sorting center?
4. Many military voters overseas get their ballots electronically, but may not have regular access to the internet. How does this change affect them? How can we make sure that the deadline change doesn't prevent military and overseas Ohioans from voting?

Drop Boxes

5. Is there evidence that there were any issues with the use of dropboxes in Ohio in 2020 or in prior years?

6. Will you direct counties to comprehensively track how many people use drop boxes and for what purposes from each county BOE?
7. Can you elaborate on the rationale for having multiple drop boxes at a single location from a data perspective?
8. How does limiting dropbox use to just 10 days impact the other uses of drop boxes (voter registration, absentee requests, campaign finance filings) and how will you convey to voters/candidates that change?
9. Rep. Seitz testified that the drop boxes could still be used for voter registration. How will local BOEs prohibit the use of drop boxes and differentiate its usage after the voter registration deadline until the 10th day before ED?

Curbside
10. How will poll workers or election officials be trained on identifying if someone is disabled and unable to come into the building to vote so that they are not discriminating against persons with disabilities? Will there be a tracking system in place?

Monday Early Voting
11. Which day(s) and times would you move the six hours of early voting traditionally held on the Monday before Election Day?
    a. Highly populated urban and some rural counties across the state often have long early vote lines, particularly during the last weekend. Would those hours be best to allocate to the weekends?

Automated Voter Registration
HB 294 seems to give the SoS's office the discretion of drafting language used on the customer facing electronic display for AVR.
12. If the language is left at the discretion of the SoS, will you commit to a bipartisan, public process to craft the language?
13. Do you have a recommendation on whether the language should be left to the discretion of the SoS's office or if the language should be prescribed in the bill to eliminate the opportunity for alterations by future SoS?

Verification of Petition Signatures
HB 294 requires county Boards of Election to verify all petition signatures and record that in a voters' registration record. Currently, BOEs don't differentiate between a bad signature and a bad address.
14. How will you advise BOEs on the collecting and reporting of the data?
15. Will petition signatories be alerted if their signature is denied in enough time to rectify problems so they can re-register or cast a ballot?

Data Tracking and Reporting
Analysis can help improve our electoral systems to make them more effective, efficient, and secure. There are many areas where we do not have uniform tracking, which prevents us from adequately evaluating elections policy and practices.

16. How are you planning to collect and report data on:
    a. Number and Reasons for provisional ballots *issued* to voters
    b. Numbers and Reasons for provisional ballot rejections
    c. Number and Reasons of Absentee Application Rejections
    d. Number and Reasons of Absentee Ballot Rejections
    e. Early Vote & Election Day Line Wait Times (including days, locations, and reasons lines were long)

Collecting and publishing this data is crucial to protecting the right to vote. The more we know, the better we will be at solving electoral problems. We look forward to hearing from you and further working with you to ensure election protection for all Ohioans.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters. Please let us know if you would like to discuss them in detail by contacting Kayla Griffin at kayla@allvotingislocal.org.

Sincerely,

Ohio Voter Rights Coalition Steering Committee:
Kayla Griffin, All Voting is Local Ohio
Camille Wimbish, Ohio Voice
Catherine Turcer, Common Cause Ohio
Jen Miller, League of Women Voters of Ohio