

# The Uncounted Ballots of 2024 and the 34,000 Ohioans Silenced at the Ballot Box

Amid a national attack on voter access, Ohio's 2024 election shows that anti-voter policies have real and lasting consequences for voters and should be a warning to everyone who values democracy. In 2024, All Voting is Local released [The State of Provisional Ballots Post-HB 458 in Ohio](#),<sup>1</sup> detailing January 2023's passing of HB 458's impact on Ohio voters. Before the bill's passage, in Ohio, the provisional ballot was often called the [ballot of last resort](#).<sup>2</sup> Now, following HB 458's implementation, tens of thousands of voters have been required to use a provisional ballot when voting, a drastic change compared to the steady decline in the use of provisional ballots in previous elections.

At the end of 2024, Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose touted in a December press release [that every vote counts in Ohio](#),<sup>3</sup> emphasizing the number of races that were decided by just one or two votes. **The truth is that 34,364 votes, 10,000 more than the number of provisional ballots rejected in 2020, did not count in Ohio in 2024 – despite lower voter turnout in 2024 than in 2020. This amounted to approximately 1 in 4 provisional ballot voters having their ballot rejected and their vote not counted.**

These provisional rejections have real consequences. Per SOS LaRose's press release, counties like Marion and Jefferson had elections decided by only one vote. However, the provisionals rejected in those counties total 343 and 59 respectively, meaning that those one-vote elections could have easily ended with a different outcome in either direction had even a *fraction* of those provisional ballots been counted.

As stated above, the total number of provisional ballots rejected increased by nearly 10,000 rejections in one presidential term. Of the 34,364 provisional ballots rejected, 22,559 were rejected because the voters who cast them were not registered in the state, and an additional 7,053 were rejected for failure to provide the required identification as outlined by HB 458.

It is very likely that the rejected provisional ballots impacted every single one of the races Secretary LaRose highlighted. Anti-voter policies have, unsurprisingly, led to more ballot rejections and greater disenfranchisement; policies such as limiting acceptable forms of voter ID for all Ohioans and reducing the number of days to cure, or fix, a ballot with proper identification from 10 days to four days have increased the statewide percentage of provisional rejections from 15.8% in 2020, up to 24.6% in 2024. Additionally, the secretary of state's office ramped up voter registration purges leading up to the 2024 election, resulting in [154,995](#)<sup>4</sup> voters being purged from the rolls.

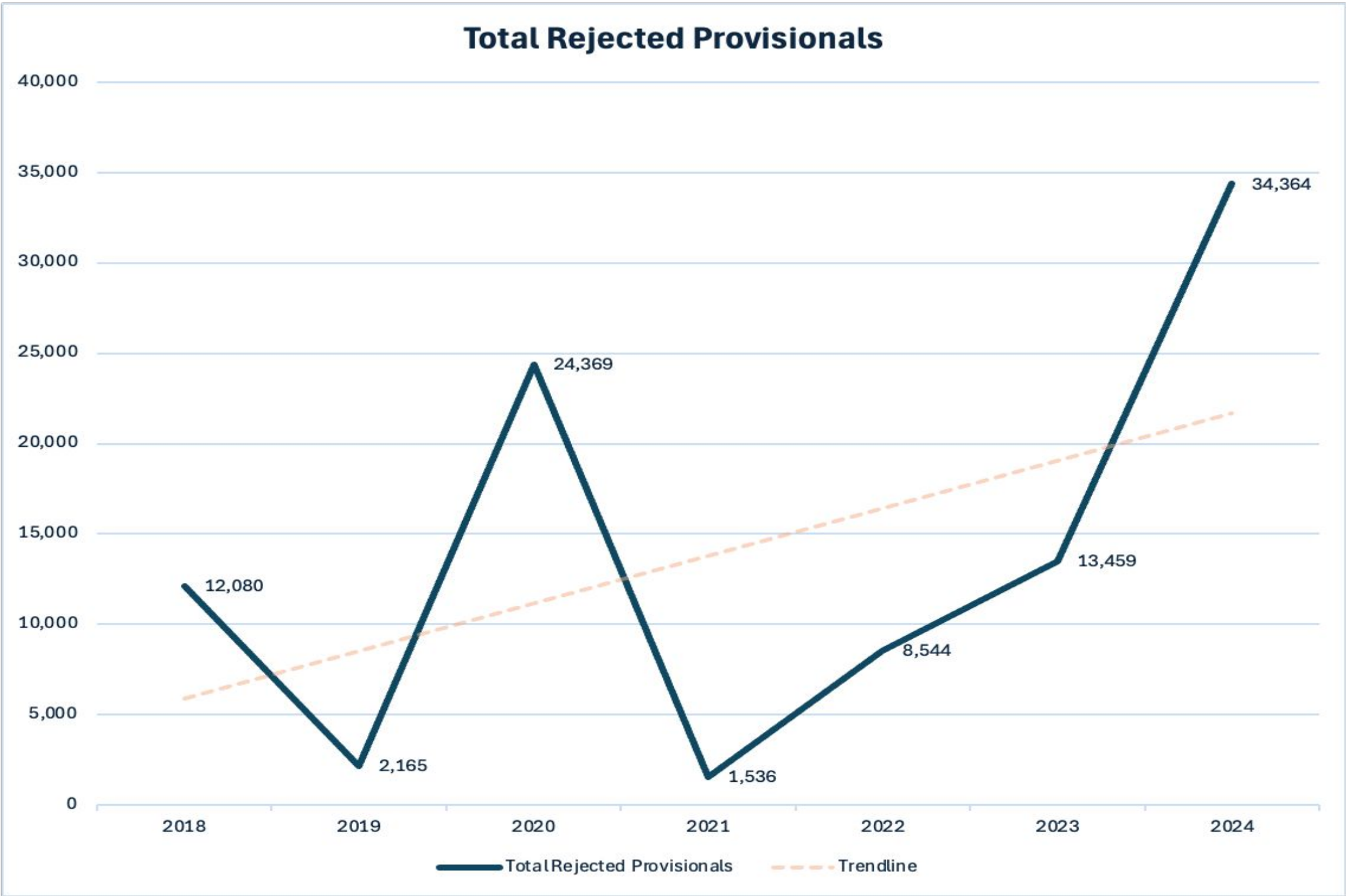
Worth noting is that, in Ohio, although provisional ballot rejections mean a voter's vote will not count in that current election, the provisional ballot itself is used to update or register voters who were not properly registered. That means the next time they vote, they will be able to vote a regular ballot. **This is a significant safeguard in Ohio's election process that ensures as many eligible voters as possible can register.** Protection of this safeguard is crucial to prevent provisional rejections from skyrocketing even further and leading to long-term disenfranchisement of Ohio voters.

### The Analysis:

The data team at All Voting is Local calculated the percentage of rejected provisional ballots for the top two rejection reasons, as well as overall totals in Ohio for every year from 2018 to 2023 to compare against the 2024 numbers.

Year	Total Rejected Provisionals	Not Registered (Percent)	No ID Provided (Percent)	Provisional Rejection (Percent)
2018	12,080	54.9%	5.5%	12.1%
2019	2,165	63.8%	8.5%	10.1%
2020	24,369	70.3%	5.0%	15.8%
2021	1,536	63.2%	8.8%	9.8%
2022	8,544	64.5%	8.2%	9.8%
2023	13,459	54.8%	28.4%	22.3%
2024	34,364	65.6%	20.5%	24.6%

Over the last 4 years, the total number of rejected provisional ballots has been steadily increasing in Ohio, and provisional rejection rates along with it. This is a troubling pattern for Ohioans hoping to have their voice heard come each November.







**The numbers are clear: there has been a significant increase in rejected provisional ballots**

**since the beginning of 2023.** The effects of HB 458 and other anti-voter policies and actions carried out by Ohio's officials are far-reaching and apolitical; they are felt across Ohio regardless of where you live. In Ohio's largest county, Franklin, provisional rejection rates are up 5% compared to 2020. In Ohio's smallest county, Vinton, provisional rejection rates are up 4.8% compared to 2020. Even in average-sized counties like Clark and Wood, provisional rejection rates are up 16.1% and 7.1% respectively. This accounted for 13,459 voters having their vote blocked in 2023 and 34,364 voters disenfranchised in 2024. These are critical, uncounted votes in elections won by razor-thin margins. There can be no doubt that provisional ballot rejections impacted the outcomes of many of Ohio's elections.

If Ohio doesn't remedy this problem, we will continue to see more people disenfranchised each election cycle. Before 2023's HB 458, in comparable elections, like the 2018 and 2022 midterms, it is easy to see a decline in provisional ballot rejections. In fact, the 2022 midterm election had roughly 3,500 fewer rejected provisional ballots. Similarly, 629 fewer provisional ballots were rejected in 2021's off-cycle election compared to the 2019 off-cycle election. This highlights a trend demonstrating that more provisional ballots were being accepted and more votes were being counted.

Provisional ballots continue to be a hotly contested topic in the state of Ohio, but it is clear that the current status quo post HB 458 only serves to disenfranchise thousands and ensure that there are fewer voices heard in Ohio's elections every year. This trend should deeply concern all those who support the democratic process. As SOS LaRose has already proved, every vote counted could potentially swing elections in one direction or another. Steps must be taken to protect our elections, and safeguards like automatic voter registration can protect every voter's right to be heard each November, and in every election.

**Disclaimer:** All Voting is Local is a nonpartisan Section 501(c)(3) organization. This data was acquired to be used exclusively for nonpartisan educational and research purposes consistent with All Voting is Local's status as a 501(c)(3) organization.

---

**Sources:**

1. [https://allvotingislocal.org/wp-content/uploads/AVL-FactSheet\\_-OH-Provisional-Analysis-2023-1.pdf](https://allvotingislocal.org/wp-content/uploads/AVL-FactSheet_-OH-Provisional-Analysis-2023-1.pdf)
  2. <https://allvotingislocal.org/reports/too-many-ballots-of-last-resort-ohio/>
  3. <https://www.ohiosos.gov/media-center/press-releases/2024/2024-12-26/>
  4. <https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/politics/elections/2024/08/02/ohio-purges-155000-voters-from-rolls-ahead-of-november-election/74602499007/>
- Ohio Secretary of State Office Official Election Results and Data. Retrieved from <https://www.ohiosos.gov/elections/election-results-and-data/>

Prepared by All Voting Is Local (February 2025)