



House Elections and Ethics Committee  
October 5, 2021

Promote the Vote (“PTV”) submits the below written testimony in opposition to SB 302.

PTV also continues to oppose HBs 5268 and 5288. We oppose these bills for the reasons outlined in our written testimony, submitted to this body on September 21, 2021. That testimony can be found on our website, [PromoteTheVoteMI.com](http://PromoteTheVoteMI.com), under our [newsfeed](#).

In addition, we note that the online application tool which HB 5288 would prohibit has already been used by more than 4,500 voters across Michigan to request their absentee ballots for the upcoming November 2021 election. As we’ve said before, making it more difficult for registered voters to exercise their constitutional right to vote by absentee ballot is analogous to locking the polling place door on Election Day. Its true purpose is to disenfranchise voters, and it will disenfranchise voters.

**Promote the Vote Opposes SB 302 Because It Is Unnecessary and Will Deter Michiganders from Making Their Voices Heard.**

Adding SB 302’s new, unnecessary statement to the voter registration application will not make voting more convenient. Nor will the statement -- i.e., that “the elector understands that it is a felony to offer to vote or attempt to vote more than once at the same election” -- make our already-secure elections more secure. Rather, the threatening and confusing language will serve only to discourage eligible voters from registering to vote at all. Since this bill is not addressing any actual problem, it appears that its true goal is to do just that -- discourage civic participation by the voters of this state. Therefore, PTV opposes the bill.

SB 302 will not make our elections more secure. Nor is such an objective even necessary, as Michigan’s elections have already - time and time again - been proven secure. Most recently, the Michigan Senate Oversight Committee investigated myriad false claims of election fraud and found no merit to any of them. Michigan Senate Oversight Committee, [Report on the November 2020 Election in Michigan](#) (noting that “citizens should be confident the results [of the November 2020 election] represent the true results of the ballots cast by the people of Michigan,” and commending “the innumerable clerks, canvassers, staff workers, and volunteers across Michigan that make the enormous complexity of elections operate so smoothly, so often.”)

In addition, while the Report on the November 2020 Election in Michigan contains 11 recommendations, adding the proposed sentence to the voter registration application is not one of them. *Id.* at 34. Thus, it is clear that SB 302 is not aimed at fixing any actual problem. Rather,

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it will serve only to erect yet another hurdle for Michiganders to jump through when they register to vote.

Adding the proposed statement to the voter registration application will intimidate eligible voters and discourage them from registering. Warning eligible voters on the registration application of any felony associated with voting is intimidating, and, as described above, unnecessary. Our democracy works best when all our voices are heard, and this body should be working to encourage - not discourage - eligible citizens from registering.

SB 302 will also discourage registered voters from taking lawful, proactive measures to ensure that their ballots are counted. Indeed, warning voters that "it is a felony to offer to vote or attempt to vote more than once" will discourage them from pursuing alternative options should their absentee ballots become lost in the mail or otherwise not arrive on time to be counted. For example, if a voter has already placed their completed absentee ballot in the mail, but sees shortly before Election Day on the Michigan Voter Information Center that their clerk has not yet received their ballot, an appropriate course of action would be to go to the clerk's office or their polling place to cancel their absentee ballot and vote a new ballot. Doing so would not legally constitute attempting to vote more than once. For an average Michigander, however, SB 302's proposed warning would likely discourage taking remedial action in this instance.

Because SB 302 does not address any issue or problem, and because it will have a chilling effect on the civic participation of Michiganders, PTV opposes the bill.