

STATE OF OHIO  
**Executive Department**

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

*Columbus*

**VETO MESSAGE**

**STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE VETO OF  
SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 472**

**June 24, 2026**

Pursuant to Article II, Section 16, of the Ohio Constitution, which states that the Governor may disapprove of any bill, I hereby disapprove of Substitute House Bill 472 and set forth the following reasons for so doing as this veto is in the public interest.

House Bill 472 would not discourage fraud, would not add any real security, and would create an additional and significant burden for Ohioans who vote by mail.

This bill is not needed, because Ohio does an excellent job running elections. We know who wins on election night and not weeks later!

Ohio does a good job of administering elections, as we have provided ample opportunities to cast votes, while avoiding the problems we have seen in recent federal elections in other states. As Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose has said, "We've ensured Ohio elections are the gold standard nationwide."

The Ohio Association of Election Officials (OAEI) -- a group of Republicans and Democrats, representing Ohio's 88 county boards of elections and their staff members who are on the front lines of elections, works to ensure that Ohio's elections are fair, accurate, and reliable. This bipartisan group agrees that Ohio's election system is strong and "is widely regarded as one of the most secure and well-administered in the nation. The success of that system is the result of careful planning, adequate resources, bipartisan administration, and the ability of elections officials to implement changes thoughtfully and effectively."

The Ohio Legislature has worked hard to fine tune our election laws over the last few years. In fact, since taking office as Governor in 2019, I have signed numerous election-related bills into law that help protect the integrity of the voting process. Because much has already been done legislatively, I have said that a very compelling case must be made if we are to change Ohio's election laws once again.

House Bill 472 does not make that compelling case.

H.B. 472 does not give voter officials any new tools to fight fraud. The heart of this bill has to do with photo identification documents (IDs). The purpose of a photo ID is to match the picture on the ID with the face of the person presenting the ID. This makes logical sense when votes are cast in person. However, requiring the photo ID for the mail-in ballot process does not provide election officials with any opportunity to verify if the ID picture matches the face of the voter and thereby serves as no additional verification of the voter's true identity.

Further, H.B. 472 would create a new burden for absentee voters by requiring them to take new, additional steps for their vote to be counted. Absentee voters would now be required either to access a new online portal and learn how to use it to upload images of their photo ID, or make and print photocopies of their photo ID, or affirm they are exempt from these requirements via a specific form that does not yet exist but would need to be created by the Secretary of State. While there may be disagreement whether these are large or small burdens, they are burdens, nonetheless, and when layered upon the existing steps already required to vote absentee and vote by mail, there would certainly be voters discouraged from exercising their right to vote.

The burden added in H.B. 472 would particularly impact, as the Ohio Association of Election Official says, "senior citizens, individuals living in long-term care facilities, voters with mobility challenges, and those with limited access to technology may face additional burdens that could discourage participation or prevent otherwise eligible voters from casting a ballot." The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) echoed these concerns, saying that "many older Ohioans have successfully voted absentee for years. As requirements change, additional steps, verification requirements, or technical processes can create barriers if they are not carefully designed and clearly understood. Even when well-intended, increased complexity can make it harder for eligible voters to successfully complete the process."

It should also be noted that H.B. 472 would require significant changes, including technical changes that are not funded. According to the Ohio Legislative Service Commission, "The Secretary of State will incur significant costs either to create in-house or contract with an IT vendor to make and maintain a secure online portal allowing for the submission of absent voter ballot applications according to the bill's specifications." Likewise, county Boards of Elections would incur new administrative costs with no additional resources provided. In other words, this is an unfunded mandate both for the Ohio Secretary of State and for every county in Ohio.

And so, while on paper, one can make the case that there is a pathway for absentee voters to overcome the hurdles to voting that this bill creates, if the net result is that a number of voters will be deterred from making the attempt to vote, that result is hurtful -- not helpful -- to our efforts to include all of our citizens in the most basic act that involves them in our democratic process. The provision in H.B. 472 that allows for online absentee ballot applications is much needed, and I commend the Legislature for passing it. It is unfortunate that it is in a bill that I must veto.

H.B. 472 is all burden for so little benefit. Therefore, this veto is in the public interest.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name and caused the Great Seal of the State of Ohio to be affixed at Columbus this 24th day of June, Two Thousand Twenty-Six.

*Mike DeWine*

Mike DeWine, Governor

This will acknowledge the receipt of a copy of this veto message of Substitute House Bill 472 that was disapproved by Governor Mike DeWine on June 24, 2026.

*Ali Lagum*, Assistant Clerk  
Name and Title of Officer

*6-24-26 9:54 pm*  
Date and Time of Receipt