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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Voter Advocates Denounce Early Voting Cuts in H.B. 250

(Columbus, Ohio) – The Ohio Fair Elections Network, a coalition of national, state and local fair elections advocates, decried the introduction of H.B. 250, a bill seeking to limit Ohio’s early vote period from 35 days to 17 days. The bill was introduced by Representative John Becker (R-Union Township), and currently has only 3 co-sponsors.

In 2011, the legislature passed remarkably similar restrictions to early voting in H.B. 194. Over 300,000 Ohioans signed a petition to referendum H.B. 194, which temporarily stopped the law from going into effect. Greg Moore of Fair Elections Ohio recalled, “the legislature then took the extraordinary step of repealing H.B. 194 before it went before the voters. He questioned, “if the legislature recognized that severe cuts to early voting were so unpopular in 2012, why resurrect the same bad idea a year later?”

Deidra Reese of Ohio Voice noted the popularity of early voting among both voters and Boards of Elections. “Early voting is convenient and flexible enough to accommodate the busiest of voters’ schedules. She added, it’s also well-liked by Boards of Elections because it is a cost-saving measure that eases congestion in the polling place, and reduces stress on poll workers and voting machines.”

Pete Talley of the Ohio Unity Coalition stated, “the entire reason the Ohio legislature passed no-fault absentee voting in the first place was to fix the problem of widespread lines in 2004. She added, “Cutting early voting from 35 days to 17 days will only take Ohio backwards when we should be working to ensure that voting is convenient for everyone.”

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