

53-R-9

A Resolution to Encourage The Ohio State University to Observe Election Day as a Paid Holiday Known As The John Lewis Voting Rights Day

Lauren Sutherland (for herself, Teresa Lebowitz, and Gabe Myers) introduced the following resolution to the Governmental Relations Legislative Committee, where it passed. Then the Steering Committee, where it passed, and the floor, where it passed.

Whereas the Undergraduate Student Government represents all undergraduate students at The Ohio State University, and

Whereas the fundamental values and goals of The Ohio State University embrace the mission of preparing a diverse student body to be leaders and engaged citizens,¹ and

Whereas voting is a critical civic duty that impacts the well-being of individuals and our community by helping us realize the ideals of a vibrant democracy, and

Whereas a recent Census study indicated that 14% of registered voters did not vote because they were too busy or had a scheduling conflict,² and

Whereas only 38.6% of The Ohio State University undergraduate students voted in the 2018 election,³ and

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges that students, faculty, and staff already face when attempting to vote, including scheduling time to vote in between work, classes, and extracurricular commitments, and

¹ <https://oaa.osu.edu/mission-vision-values-and-core-goals>

² <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2018/demo/P20-582.pdf>

³ <https://activities.osu.edu/posts/documents/2014-2018-nslve-report-ohio-state-university.pdf>

Whereas ample time for democratic participation on Election Day is key in preventing voting disparities between those who are constrained by work or school from voting and those who have the luxury of time and access, and

Whereas the Big Ten Voting Challenge encourages member institutions to increase voter turnout and voting rates in order to “form the habits of active and informed citizenship, make democratic participation a core value on their campus, and cultivate generations of engaged citizens who are essential to a healthy democracy”,⁴ and

Whereas election day is always held on the first Tuesday of November in the State of Ohio, and

Whereas the Council of Graduate Students passed Resolution 1920-013 on August 14, 2020 also calling on The Ohio State University to observe Election Day as a paid holiday known as the “John Lewis Voting Rights Day”,⁵ and

Whereas poll workers are essential to making election day run smoothly and ensuring that the county can keep as many polling places open, and

Whereas 58% of all poll workers were over the age of 61 in 2018,⁶ and

Whereas the CDC considers people over the age of 65 to be at a significantly higher risk of contracting COVID-19 and therefore should not be in contact with many people.⁷

Therefore, Let it Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government recommends that The Ohio State University observe election day as a paid holiday recognized as the “John Lewis Voting Rights Day”, and

⁴ <https://www.allinchallenge.org/bigten/>

⁵ <https://cgs.osu.edu/posts/documents/res-1920-013-election-day.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/06/older-people-account-for-large-shares-of-poll-workers-and-voters-in-u-s-general-elections/>

⁷ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/06/older-people-account-for-large-shares-of-poll-workers-and-voters-in-u-s-general-elections/>

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government supports the creation of an Election Day paid holiday to make The Ohio State University a leader and model of democratic commitment that other Big Ten and peer institutions may follow, and

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government encourages students who feel comfortable to be poll workers and lift the burden off of older and more at-risk individuals, and

Let it Further Be Resolved that the Undergraduate Student Government supports the right to vote regardless of a citizen's race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status.

Floor Vote: Aye: 25 Nay: 0 Present: 31



Roaya Higazi
President



Nathan Rush
Speaker of the 53rd General Assembly

Date Adopted: September 16, 2020