



Ohio GOP's new plan to suppress the youth vote

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Ohio Republicans have been at the forefront of voter suppression efforts for years. In 2004, it was long lines at the polls for Democratic-leaning precincts. In 2012, they fought to reduce early voting.

But their latest plan to suppress the vote might be the sneakiest.

An amendment being pushed by House Republicans would in effect penalize Ohio colleges and universities if they help out-of-state students register to vote. The plan requires any school that offers a student proof of residency documentation for voter registration to give that student in-state tuition. According to [one estimate](#), more than 23,000 students hailing from the state's 13 biggest schools could be disenfranchised under the plan.

It could mean a tuition reduction of \$5000 to \$15,000 per student and the state's public schools could lose \$370 million a year in tuition.

State House Speaker William Batchelder has insisted the plan is intended to help students, not disenfranchise them. According to the Cleveland Plain-Dealer, last month his spokesman said "the amendment is about giving students better tuition rates, not stifling their voting rights."

But on Thursday, Batchelder revealed his real intentions this week. "The real issue for local areas in particular [is], what happens when somebody from New York City registers to vote," he said. "How do they vote on a school levy? How do they vote on a sheriff's race ...? To me, there is a significant question, particularly the levies, as to what having people who don't have to pay for them would do in terms of voting on those things."

Under Ohio law, anyone who's lived in the state for at least 30 days immediately before an election is eligible to cast a ballot. Moreover, the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional to stop students from voting in the district in which they live and attend school in the 1979 *Symm v. United States* case.

Under this new proposal, schools must choose between helping out-of-state students become in-state voters or risk huge financial losses, incentivizing the schools to do the dirty work of voter suppression, without directly violating the students' constitutional right to vote.

The GOP has plenty of incentive to reduce the number of young people voting in Ohio, as young voters typically prefer Democrats. The youth vote (voters under 30) went for Obama over Romney by a 28 point margin in 2012.

The plan has drawn criticism from Democrats and school officials alike.

Bruce E. Johnson, president of the Inter-University Council, is worried the law could have unintended consequences, including inspiring a flood of applications from out-of-state students looking to take advantage of the ability to claim cheaper in-state tuition rates, and potentially taking spots from in-state applicants.

Democratic State Representative Nina Turner, a strong voting rights supporter, complains this new proposal creates a “perverse incentive to make it harder for these students to vote.”

“We should let college students vote, we should let all eligible voters in this state vote,” [she said at a press conference this week](#). “And people should not play games at the ballot box.”

Original Article and video: <http://tv.msnbc.com/2013/05/02/ohio-gops-new-plan-to-suppress-the-youth-vote/>