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By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge (OH-11) held a news conference to discuss immediate and future restrictions on voting rights caused by Ohio's voter suppression law known as HB 194.

As the petition campaign to bring this measure to the ballot for a statewide vote draws to a close, the Congresswoman was joined by civic leaders, clergy, volunteers, and impacted citizens to update the public on those efforts.

Dr. Otis Moss Jr., Rabbi Robert Nosanchuk, and Fair Elections Ohio Campaign Director Gregory Moore all spoke about the importance of this bill. HB 194 is a voter suppression bill.

"H.B. 194, the Voter Suppression Bill, invalidates a vote where a voter properly marks the ballot in support of a particular candidate, but also writes in the name of that same candidate," said Congresswoman Fudge.

There are several portions of the Bill that has drawn opposition. House Bill 194 changes our voting laws. It reduces in-person voting to 12 days (10 weekdays, two Saturday mornings, and no Saturday afternoons, evenings or Sundays permitted), and no voting the Saturday, Sunday and Monday before the election. Absentee voting is reduced to 21 days, and the law will not permit the Board of Elections to send voters an unsolicited absentee application, so you will have to request it. This gives voters less time to vote absentee, a very popular method of voting, and will put unnecessary pressure on the Board of Elections staff.

The bill also requires minimum precinct sizes only in municipalities, with Democrats saying that provision causes longer lines in urban areas. The bill "establishes a minimum precinct size of 500 electors for precincts located in a municipal corporation," according to a bill analysis by the Ohio Legislative Service Commission.

State Republicans say it's an important cost-saving measure and levels the playing field across Ohio's 88 counties. Democrats say It is a sinister disgusting plan with no purpose other than to make sure that there will be fewer number of Black people, a fewer number of Hispanic people voting, a fewer number of working-class people voting and a fewer number of young people voting.