A new Ohio law is taking aim at what state election officials and legislators say is a growing threat — cyber attacks. Under SB 52, signed into law in October, an Ohio Cyber Reserve will be created as a division of the state National Guard. It will consist of cyber-security experts who can help deter and mitigate attacks. This force will work with local governments and businesses.

One focus of the Ohio Cyber Reserve will be election security. SB 52 received unanimous approval in the Ohio House and Senate. Other provisions in the bill include requiring the secretary of state to appoint a chief information security officer, making the secretary of state a member of Ohio’s Homeland Security Advisory Council, and mandating that county boards of elections conduct post-election audits in order to ensure the accuracy of results.

The threat of cyber-attacks to state election systems has prompted a mix of new laws and investments across the Midwest. Other examples include: a cyber navigator program in Illinois; Indiana’s $10 million investment this year in new election equipment (HB 1001); and a 20-point security plan being implemented by Minnesota’s secretary of state that includes participation by the National Guard’s new Cyber Protection Team.

By:
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