

House Bill 237 – Sponsor Testimony
House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee
Representative Dorothy Pelanda
June 21, 2017

Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chairman Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee - thank you for the opportunity to present House Bill 237 today.

HB 237 requires a political subdivision with territory in more than one county that places an issue on the ballot to notify the board of elections of every county in which the political subdivision has territory. Furthermore, the bill requires the Ohio Secretary of State's office to establish a database to facilitate communication between the boards of elections and the Secretary concerning local elections and makes an appropriation to set up such a database. I would note that the establishment of this database is contained in section 3501.054, which can be found on pages 123-125 of the bill and contains an appropriation of \$300,000 to establish the database. It is particularly important that such a system is created as it pertains to local school ballot issues that may encompass one or more counties in the state.

The goal of HB 237 is simple and straightforward: ensuring that every Ohio voter in a political subdivision is properly enfranchised to cast their vote on a local ballot issue that encompasses the area in which they reside.

HB 237 establishes a streamlined, technologically driven manner of communicating critical information from county to county and between county and state. Under the legislation, it allows for the appropriate county board of elections to ensure that a less populous county or counties of overlapping districts and subdivisions receive information on the ballot. This allows for the review of ballot proofs electronically and ensures that the information received is transmitted properly to the necessary entities.

In doing so, HB 237 allows for efficient resource utilization. Providing ballot language and candidate information electronically will free up local boards of elections and state resources to be used in other ways – cutting back on the use of paper and allowing the process to become more fluid and time-friendly.

HB 237 improves accuracy in allowing for ballot language to be built with a series of templates and allowing for proper transmission of candidate names, office titles, and ballot language which is reflected consistently and uniformly from county to county ballot and from the state to the county ballot.

Finally, the legislation frees up the worry that the ballot is in some way deficient and helps prevent the unnecessary financial withdraws associated with avoidable election challenges and the use of the courts to decide elections versus the voice of the people.

HB 237 makes necessary improvements in communication and accuracy to our voting systems in Ohio. I have been in contact with local boards of elections and the Secretary of State's office regarding this bill and they have offered guidance and suggestions as the legislative process continues.

I appreciate your attention to my testimony today and would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.