

Proponent Testimony
Paul Adams
Ohio Association of Election Officials
SB 10

Chairman Blessing, Ranking Member Clyde and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee

My name is Paul Adams. I am Director of the Lorain County Board of Elections and a member of the legislative committee for the Ohio Association of Election Officials. I am here to offer proponent testimony for SB 10, a bill that addresses two concerns shared by members of my association. I would like to thank Senator LaRose for his willingness to work with the OAEO and the Secretary of State's office to craft this well-conceived legislation.

The first, and most obvious problem came to light in the 8th Congressional District when Speaker Boehner retired and a successor was to be elected. As you are likely aware, a special primary election was triggered and each party selected their candidate for the general election. The snafu occurred when one of these candidates dropped off the ballot and a replacement was needed. Only one candidate put their name forward. However, due to the wording of the ORC, a second election was required to be held to nominate that candidate. This election, in which only one candidate appeared on the ballot, cost tax payers over \$400,000 to conduct. SB 10 fixes this glaring issue by removing the requirement to hold a special congressional primary where only one candidate will appear on the ballot.

The second, and closely related, issue has to do with regularly scheduled municipal primary elections. It is not infrequent for only one candidate to **file** for a primary election. And the revised code is clear that in these instances, a board of elections can certify a candidate through to the general election without conducting a primary election. However, on occasion, multiple candidates file for a primary, but for one reason or another only one candidate is certified to the ballot. It could be that one of the candidates drops their candidacy after they file petitions, but before they are certified. Or more likely, they fall short of the necessary signatures to appear on the ballot. In these instances, boards are still required to conduct the primary even though only one candidate will appear on the ballot. This is because multiple candidates **filed** for the primary election. SB 10 remedies this issue by stating that boards may cancel a primary if only one candidate is **certified** to the primary ballot as opposed to one candidate **filing** for the primary election.

In short, the goal of SB 10 is to save taxpayer dollars, and boards of election from unnecessary work and costs. It does so while protecting the right of citizens to vote in a primary or special congressional primary IF there is more than one candidate to choose from. I urge your support of this very common sense legislation, and would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.