

I am the current Chair of the Lorain County Board of Elections, was formerly the Director of this Board for more than 15 years, as well as a former President of the Ohio Association of Elections Officials and long-time member of our Legislative Committee. I respectfully submit testimony on my own behalf as I believe that we as public servants must continually strive to improve the accessibility and integrity of our elections while maintaining the lowest cost possible without creating a potential to lose any of the features that make Ohio's elections procedures so safe and convenient for our voters.

Therefore, I am a proponent of SB21, which would allow Boards of Elections the flexibility to assign the proper number of election workers in each of its polling places, while acknowledging that each election is different – and each polling location within an election or a county is also unique.

In large counties in particular, we often house several precincts in the same polling location to provide ample parking, handicapped accessible facilities and a convenient location for our voters. In today's elections, we employ two relatively-new methods that have greatly decreased the need for four election workers for each of the precincts in the location: the increase of the so-called "no-fault absentee ballots," which have reduced the number of people who opt to vote on election day; and the electronic pollbooks, which permits our boards of elections to allow voters to go to the next available table, decreasing the voter's time in line. Signing in and obtaining the proper ballot is much faster, voters can go to any DRE voting machine in the location. The use of the electronic pollbook has dramatically (and positively) changed the tasks performed by our election workers and has eliminated the need for four election workers per precinct in most elections today.

The greatest improvement is that it will recognize that some elections are quite predictable in having very small voter turnouts. For example, a special election in which only one issue will be on the ballot, or similarly an election to replace a member of congress, or a primary election which will have only one contested race or renewal of longstanding levies.

Of course, SB21 will not prohibit us from utilizing four (or more) should we determine that it is necessary. It simply helps us allocate our resources at the optimal level for each election that we conduct. That's good management in any county.

I therefore urge passage of SB21 and thank Sen. Eucker, the co-sponsors and other members of the Ohio Senate for their continual work in helping us improve the quality and efficiency of elections in Ohio, while keeping easy voter accessibility and the highest of integrity in our election systems. Thank you for your consideration.

Marilyn Jacobcik  
Lorain County Board of Elections