



Chairman Carfagna, Ranking member Sweeney, members of the sub-committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today on behalf of the Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose. My name is Kimberly Burns and I serve as Assistant Secretary of State and Director of Operations.

As you know, Secretary of State Frank LaRose was elected in 2018 to serve as Ohio's chief elections officer and the gateway to new businesses in our state. Prior to his election as Secretary of State, he had the pleasure of working with many of you as a member of Ohio's General Assembly, and deeply appreciates your time today to consider the proposed budget for the Secretary of State's office for Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021. His responsibilities are many, but primarily focus on two missions: keeping our state's elections secure, accessible & accurate -- and promoting economic growth. The office requires the necessary resources to successfully carry out those duties.

Our Fiscal Years 2020-2021 budget request will ask for \$1,984,196 from the General Revenue Fund in each fiscal year. Historically, the GRF has accounted for 12.2 percent of our office's total revenue. Our budget request reduces that reliance with just 8.7 percent of our total revenue coming from GRF.

As you know, maintaining Ohio's tradition of secure elections is paramount. In January of 2017, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security designated Election Infrastructure as part of the nation's critical infrastructure. This classification is a recognition of our overarching responsibility to Ohio voters. By its very nature, each and every election system is vulnerable to ever-changing security environments. By enhancing our cyber-defense posture to serve as a model for the nation, we will be in the best possible standing to deter any threats to our election system, both foreign and domestic. After all, we know in cybersecurity – like all national security concerns – the enemy only has to be right once, and we have to be right each and every time.

That's why approximately 75 percent of our GRF request is allocated towards upgrading Ohio's cyber-defense. Included within that request are matching funds required to draw down \$12 million from the federal government via the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018. This allows us to appropriately implement Title I of the Help America Vote Act of 2002. Also, for the first time in the Secretary of State's office, we are going to incorporate a Chief Information Security Officer into our holistic approach to state, federal and local partnerships and put a laser-focus on enhancing technological election security efforts both in our office and in all 88 counties.

We also must provide the necessary funds to ensure election workers are properly trained. A portion of our GRF request is designated for poll worker training. Not only is this training a statutorily required reimbursement to county board of elections, it's also the right thing to do.

Ohio has a long history of dedicated and skilled poll workers who have helped run successful election after successful election, and this training will help prepare them for any changes on the horizon.

Finally, there is more to do to make Ohio more business friendly. We will utilize the fees produced by our Business Services division to continue supporting those operations, including a major new effort to implement Senate Bill 263 – a modernization of Ohio’s antiquated licensing system for public notaries. By consolidating and streamlining the education, testing, and background checks of public notaries we’ll provide a more efficient and high-quality service to taxpayers.

Thank you to the committee, and I’d be happy to answer any questions.