



Chairman Coley, Vice Chairman Huffman, Ranking Member Craig, members of the Government Oversight and Reform Committee -- thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of Senate Bill 30.

This bill creates the bipartisan Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission. Similar to the operations of the Ohio Bicentennial Commission, this group will work to ensure Ohio commemorates the ratification of the 19th amendment to the Constitution that finally gave women the right to vote.

Ohio was among the first states to ratify the amendment in June of 1919. Over the next year, states continued to debate the amendment until August 1920 when enough states had ratified the amendment for it to become a part of our U.S. constitution.

This commission will have the opportunity to celebrate the work of the women and men who successfully fought to give women the right to vote. We want to work with local organizations around the state to educate the public about what happened 100 years ago and what all went into the fight but also to connect that to why it is still relevant today. We will honor those who came before us, while also using this opportunity to promote civic engagement.

The commission will consist of members from both major parties in Ohio, members of the legislature as well as my office. There is a provision in the bill that allows for additional members to be named to the commission going forward.

The commission will begin working immediately upon the successful passage of this legislation in order to ensure we can begin events by June and facilitate a year-long centennial celebration going from June 2019 through August 2020.

Groups such as the Ohio History Connection, League of Women's Voters, Ohio Democratic Party, Ohio Republican Party and numerous others have already been working to put various celebrations of this milestone year together. To be clear, we are looking to support, not supplant their efforts. My vision is for this commission is to build on the work already underway by these great organizations and to provide resources, coordination, administrative support and to generally elevate the observance of this anniversary to the appropriate level of legitimacy which comes as a result of a statewide commission created by the legislature in statute. I have personally, along with my team already begun holding discussions with several of these groups to assure that we're working with a common purpose, to make sure that this celebration happens the right way. I look forward to our continued work with them and others who understand the importance of the 19th Amendment and how it has shaped our country.

I want to thank Senator Kunze and Senator Williams for sponsoring this important piece of legislation and to all the co-sponsors. The 19th Amendment is a milestone in our state's history that deserves proper and significant recognition.

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on Senate Bill 30. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.