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SPONSOR TESTIMONY
HOUSE BILL 122

Good Afternoon Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Rezabek, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 122.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) was established in 1913. The enabling statute provided for gubernatorial appointments with no more than 2 out of the 3 belonging to the same political party. This was changed in 1983 when the Commission was expanded to 5 members, so that no more than 3 could be of the same political party. As you know, this Commission directly affects the lives and the pocketbooks of millions of Ohioans.

The prevailing practice has been for the Governor's party to hold the majority of the Commission seats with the remaining seats going to the opposition party. This has not been the practice in recent years; it still remains a problem because of a recent Senate rejection of a Democratic appointee.

My bill is a simple one. It merely requires that there be at least one Democrat and one Republican on the Commission at all times.

Bipartisan government is always the best government. The citizens of Ohio are always better served when there are the checks and balances present that only bipartisanship can provide. Let's take our experience here, there is never a question of the ultimate vote, but the process we go through is strengthened by having bi-partisan input.

Please join me in re-establishing the bipartisan makeup of this Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, not only for this administration, but for future Democratic or Republican administrations.

Thank you again for your time Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.