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92nd House District



Sponsor Testimony

HB 509 Village dissolution/county charter petition deadline

Before the House State Government Committee

May 11th, 2016

Chairman Maag, Vice-Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Slesnick, and members of the House State Government Committee: thank you for the opportunity to present sponsor testimony on House Bill 509.

I come before you today to shed light on what happened within my district. In 2013, the village of Orient, OH residents voted to dissolve their village due to financial restraints. The village of Orient, Scioto Township and Pickaway County expected a smooth transition after surrendering corporate powers, but their road ahead was much longer than they thought. After Orient's dissolve the township and county looked to the Ohio Revised Code for guidance, but found no guidelines for a situation like this. Orient's struggle with transitioning through village dissolution proves that there is opportunity for an improvement within the Ohio Revised Code.

House Bill 509 would allow for electors of a village to petition the board of elections, as an alternative to the legislative authority, for the dissolution of the village. This would provide for the timely transfer of village property and services with the assistance of the Auditor of State. Additionally, requiring the Auditor of State to perform and complete an audit or agreed-upon procedures before transferring any cash balances to a township following village dissolution, and to modify the deadline to file a county charter petition with the board of county commissioners.

House Bill 509 would streamline the village dissolution process, making the surrender of corporate powers easier. This would allow petitioners to submit the surrender to the board of elections rather than the village council

if the council fails to act within 30 days of receipt. Additionally, lowering the signature threshold of required signatures from 40 to 30 percent of the voters from the last regular municipal election; and an affirmative vote instructs the Auditor of State's office to facilitate the dissolution process.

Providing that within 30 days of the certification of the dissolution vote, the Auditor of State's office shall commence an audit of all cash balances to be transferred to the township. The Auditor of State's office currently conducts an audit to close-out the fund balances and certifies the amount to be given from the village to the township, this codifies their current practice. The transferring of a village utility property, states that subject to an agreement, village electric, water, and sewer utility property shall be transferred in a timely manner to the absorbing entity. Absorbing entities could include a county, municipal utility corporation, or a special district established under ORC 6119. Establishing that any remaining cash balances will be transferred at the completion of the audit to the absorbing entity.

Once again, Chairman Maag, Vice-Chair Hambley, Ranking Member Slesnick, and members of the House State Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on behalf of HB 509. I would be happy to answer any questions.