



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 52.

In 2017, the Department of Homeland Security named Election Infrastructure as part of our 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 implementing a cyber-defense posture that is 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 and be prepared to respond should an emergency occur.

Senate Bill 52 is a big part of that. At its core -- It's about cyber-security and the security of our elections. It is about being proactive in our preparedness while also having a way to mitigate an attack. Heading into the 2020 presidential election, it's important we build on our past work as a state to ensure our elections remain secure and accessible for all of Ohio's registered voters. From requiring a paper trail for every vote to last year's important bill to fund new voting machines for every Ohio county, the Buckeye State is a leader in the nation for election security but we don't stay that way by standing still. SB 52 is that crucial next step so that all of us as leaders can look our constituents in the eye and honestly say that we're doing our best to respond to this threat.

This bill will create the Ohio Cyber Reserve within the National Guard. Functioning like a traditional National Guard unit, these highly-trained and thoroughly vetted civilian cyber security experts will be able to respond to a cyber-attack when called to service.

More importantly, these teams will have the ability to work with our local governments, county Boards of Elections, and other local partners to help train them on best practices for cyber defense. Being proactive by teaching our board members how to identify possible threats is vital to the security of our elections.

Beyond the creation of the cyber-reserve force, this bill holds other major upgrades to cyber security and election security for my office and Ohio's elections.

Every day, we are learning new and better ways to protect our elections -- and as we all know, the bad guys only have to be right once while we have to be right each and every time. That's why we need to use this bill to create a permanent Chief Information Security Officer housed within the Secretary of State's office. They will not only bring an elevated level of election security expertise to my office, but also will be a vital resource for the 88 County Boards of Elections.

Now is the time to require post-election audits in statute. That's the only way we can ensure the results of our elections are Accurate and provide Ohioans the confidence they deserve that their election was run correctly and accurately. Currently, these only happen every other year and only at the directive of the Secretary. Our elections are far too important for these audits to essentially be optional to the will of the Secretary. It needs to be written in law to guarantee future Secretaries continue this vital practice of auditing the results of our elections.

The final piece of this bill is making the Secretary of State a member of the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC). Recently I was in Washington DC for a meeting of our nation's Secretaries of State. DHS provided a classified briefing detailing the challenges we face in the upcoming election. With that in mind, I believe it's essential the Secretary of State have a seat on the HSAC. That will allow the Secretary to serve as an important participant as any potential threats directed towards our elections infrastructure or county Boards of Elections are considered.

I want to thank Senator Gavarone for taking up this important topic. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of Senate Bill 52, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.