**Proponent Testimony**

**Senate Bill 107**

**Phil Long, Mercer County Board of Election**

**Ohio Association of Election Officials**

Chairman Coley, Ranking Member Craig and members of the Senate Government Oversight and Reform Committee:

My name is Phil Long. I am a member of the Mercer County Board of Elections and trustee for the the Ohio Association of Election Officials (OAEO). I am pleased to offer our association’s support for SB 107.

As mentioned in sponsor testimony, SB 107 will allow local candidates to file campaign finance reports electronically with county boards of elections. We believe this will be beneficial in a couple of ways:

* By filing the reports electronically, the information contained in those reports will be immediately and much more easily searchable and accessible to the public.
* Reducing paper work for boards of elections will help us be more efficient and eliminate the difficulty of dealing with many pieces of paper. In Mercer County, we do not have a full-time campaign finance division, so any legislation that allows for less time shuffling papers gives our limited staff more time to focus on administering elections

As you know state legislative and statewide candidates have been filing campaign finance reports electronically for over a decade with excellent results. The infrastructure is already in place to allow local candidates to do this. We just need to allow them access to it.

Finally, it is worth noting that the parameters of the bill have been carefully crafted to exclude candidates from this filing if they meet the following criteria: 1) The office which they are seeking pays less than $5,000 annually, 2) the candidate raises less than $2,000, or 3) the candidate raises no more than $100 from any single source.

The same language, introduced as SB 44, passed the Senate unanimously in the last General Assembly, and unanimously passed out of House Committee. It fell just short of making it to the Governor’s desk. In closing, I want to thank Senator Rulli for his willingness to work with our association to draft this bill. We believe it continues the concerted efforts of this body to modernize Ohio’s elections system. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee might have.