

Proponent Testimony
HB 458
Ohio Association of Elections Officials

Chairwoman Gavarone, Ranking Member Maharath and members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee:

My name is Shane Breckel and I am Director of the Clinton County Board of Elections and legislative committee member of the Ohio Association of Election Officials (OAEO). The Clinton County Board of Elections strongly supports HB 458 and would like to express our appreciation to Rep. Hall for bringing this legislation forward.

Our experience with August elections has been they are costly both financially and to the limited resources available to us as a small county board of elections. Additionally, the low voter turnout associated with August elections gives our office little return on investment for the money spent and the resources allocated. We believe the elimination of August elections and conducting two elections a year would allow for more efficient and impactful elections for our voters.

For most small county boards of elections, August elections are not part of the annual budget. While state law requires subdivisions to prepay 65% of the estimated costs of an August special election, ultimately it is the county commissioners who must fund these unplanned elections. Even with the funding provided by county commissioners, inevitably many boards of election end up using funds budgeted for the general election.

An August special election requires all the planning and resource allocation as any other election. This includes ballot programming, design and testing; poll worker recruitment and training; and the hiring of seasonal workers to support mandatory early voting hours. All of this overlaps with the certifying of a planned May special/primary election and the preparation for and the administration of the general election which intensifies 100 days before that election, including the filing deadline 90 days before that election. In a small county with only four full time staff members, this creates great stress and administrative challenges as we juggle multiple elections while performing other statutory duties such as voter maintenance, voter registration, and petitions.

The elimination of August special elections would allow us to focus all of our time, money and resources on conducting the two elections per year which draw higher voter turnouts with a higher degree of efficiency. We encourage the passage of HB 458 as we believe it is good for our elections and our voters.

Thank you for your consideration,



Shane C. Breckel, Director
Clinton County Board of Elections