

David Niven, Ph.D.
Opponent Testimony
House Bill 144

Holding an August Special Election is “unnecessary”¹ and “amounts to gaming the system,”² in a “chronically low turnout election when voters aren’t expecting an election to occur – and that is bad news for the civic health of our state.”¹

Holding an August Special Election “means just a handful of voters end up making big decisions,”¹ “produc[ing] skewed election results that often do not reflect the will of the people.”¹

“The side that wins is often the one that has a vested interest in the passage of the issue up for consideration.”¹

“Embarrassingly low voter turnout rates in the last two August elections are not an anomaly.”¹

“This isn’t how democracy is supposed to work.”¹

“More importantly, it doesn’t have to. Voters are just as capable of voting on...important issues during the standard primary and general elections and there is no reason why these contests can’t happen at the regularly scheduled primary and general elections which occur twice a year.”¹

“An August special election requires [election] boards to undergo a full election planning process, including recruiting and training poll workers, staffing early voting periods, and rigorous testing of equipment. These preparations are wasteful and cost the taxpayers precious scarce resources. What’s worse, the boards often have little notice or time to prepare for such elections.”¹

We’ve seen an August special election occur at a “cost of \$33.11 per vote.”²

“Simply put, an August special election is the last thing election officials should be dealing with as they ready themselves for an important November election that begins with the start of early voting in October. These unnecessary ‘off-cycle’ elections aren’t good for taxpayers, election officials. or the civic health of our state.”¹

Instead of an August special election, let’s “put a little more faith in our democracy and really encourage greater participation in our traditional election days.”³

Now stop for a moment to consider that every one of those sentiments is a direct quote from your Republican colleagues – State Representative Hall, State Representative Troy, Secretary of State LaRose – who spoke out against August elections and who helped secure the support of almost every single Republican in the legislature to put a stop to the equivalent of election date shopping for ballot questions.

Not a single thing has changed since you all stood up for that law except for your newly perceived political expediency. In the words of your own Republican colleagues, you have a choice now between putting a little faith in democracy or gaming the system.

¹ Secretary of State Frank LaRose (Republican).

² Representative Thomas Hall (Republican).

³ Representative Daniel Troy (Republican).