



**Ohio House Government Oversight Committee**

Mike Pniewski, P.E., P.S., Lucas County Engineer

April 23, 2024

Chairman Peterson, Ranking Member Humphrey, and Members of House Government Oversight Committee thank you for the opportunity to present proponent testimony for HB 430. My name is Mike Pniewski, P.E., P.S. and I am the Lucas County Engineer.

I stand before you to advocate for the passage of HB 430's mechanism of granting a Board of County Commissioners the ability to fill a vacancy in their elected County Engineer position by contracting with another county's elected County Engineer.

This legislation allows for the contracting with another county's County Engineer to fulfill the duties of the vacant office until the vacancy is filled by appointment or until the end of the term when a new County Engineer is elected. Additionally, this legislation would require that these contracted County Engineer be paid equitably to the position they are fulfilling via contract.

In addition to serving as the Lucas County Engineer, I also serve part time as an adjunct professor at the University of Toledo. I do not teach for the salary and I do not receive the benefits. Like many of my fellow County Engineers who are, or were, adjunct professors for Ohio's universities' engineering and surveyor programs; we teach because we love the classroom, the students, and for the sheer joy of giving back, and passing on knowledge to the next generation of engineers and surveyors. One of the unintended advantages to have many of Ohio's County Engineers as adjunct professors is our ability to advocate to our students to pursue both the professional engineering and professional surveying licenses. Many of my colleagues have helped mentor and shepherd students to various County Engineer offices with the pursuit of becoming a viable candidate and successor to the County Engineer office across the state.

There seems to be this idea from some quarters who may not have an understanding of our office or our profession that only those who possess a Professional Engineer (P.E.) and Professional Surveyor (P.S.) license who reside in that county are suitable to run or be appointed to the County Engineer's office in that County. This mindset limits the opportunity to encourage qualified private sector individuals with a P.E. and P.S. license with successful careers to be considered for a vacant position from other counties. In the past, I have been approached to consider running/ filling a vacancy in a different county. While I was flattered to be asked, I turned this opportunity down because I am proud of my work in Lucas County and want to be a part of its continued successful growth. However, many of my current colleagues have moved to different counties to fill a vacancy or run for office.

The option to contract an unfulfilled vacancy with another county's elected County Engineer grants the Board of County Commissioners the ability and the time necessary to widen their search for potential candidates in surrounding counties and across the state. Coupled with the removal of the private practice compensation penalty, Ohio Counties would now have a wider field of potential candidates for the office of County Engineer.

I would like to thank the Committee for hearing my testimony today and I look forward to your questions.