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**Ohio House of Representatives State and Local Government Committee
House Bill 271
Proponent Testimony
Matt Old, Erie County Commissioner**

Chairwoman John, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Brennan, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, my name is Matt Old. I have served as an Erie County Commissioner since 2016 and am a current board member of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) and also serve as the vice chair of the CCAO-OAEO (Ohio Association of Elections Officials) joint committee on elections. I want to thank you in advance for allowing me the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for House Bill 271 (HB 271) on behalf of myself.

As you may know, Ohio's counties are tasked with administering elections in the state, and it is a role that we take very seriously. I think everyone would agree that democracy functions best when citizens are engaged in the process and informed on all candidates and issues before voting.

While the elections cycle in 2023 was likely an outlier, and we were thankful that all elections were fully funded by this General Assembly, it highlighted the importance of HB 271. Multiple times, voters were asked to vote for or against statewide Issue 1, which contained different language in the August special election and the November general election. While I believe that Ohio has engaged and educated voters, it is not difficult to see how this scenario could have confused some voters. Furthermore, the confluence of issue texts and numbers could also impact local issues on the ballot, and I am glad to see that HB 271 addresses the order of statewide and local issues on the ballot.

I would like to thank Representative Peterson and Representative Matthews for introducing this legislation and for their desire to increase clarity at the ballot box. I respectfully ask this committee to favorably report House Bill 271.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 271 today and I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee at this time.

