

Dear members of the Senate Finance Committee

My name is Drew Carchedi. I am a proud resident of Poland, Ohio, which is in Mahoning County. Some people call that area "The Great Steel Valley". In Mahoning County, I serve on the Republican Party's central committee. I was elected by the people of my precinct in the May primary of 2022. Within a few months I was asked to serve on the executive committee, which is at the pleasure of our County Chairperson. In addition to the central and executive committees, I have also become very active and involved with a grass roots/ citizen led election integrity group. which does interact with our party, constituents, and our county BOE (board of elections).

I'm not just stating this stuff to give you a bio on myself. I'm sure you're looking at me and thinking, "o.k. this isn't a very impressive resumé at all. If I was intending to impress you, I would tell you that I am 42 years of age. I have been married to the same (beautiful) woman for almost half that time. Throw in raising three kids, two teens, coaching all their sports, trying to make sure they get good grades, follow God, and help operate a family business in today's economy; now I would be trying to pad some stats.

However, in regards to the before mentioned committees, especially the county central committees, I want to lay out a journey. It is a common journey that I share with thousands of patriotic Americans. This journey is about "getting involved" with our state and local government. Ohio Revised Code, sections 3517.02, thru 3517.05 is pretty clear on who can run for the positions and how. For years, we have been told by teachers, preachers, the media, and other political leaders, "hey get involved". I know that these positions may seem very pedestrian or entry level to some. However, for many people becoming a central committee person is one the best ways to get involved, to know what's going on, and to serve your local party, its constituents, as well as the interests of the community you reside in. Almost anyone can get involved with local politics in this manner. In fact, filling these positions, especially on the republican side, has become somewhat of national movement. We might even be able to call it a light weight political phenomenon. I say this because research suggests that until recently both parties have often struggled to find good candidates to fill these vacancies. Thankfully, due to some really good patriots who've been paying attention, alongside a handful of highly motivated party chairs, the political landscape has now experienced a massive uptick in patriotic engagement, as well as grass roots activism.

Moving forward, I would like to underscore the reason behind my testimony today. It has come to my attention that language in [HB 33: page 1497, line 46001 through page 1500, line 46082] proposes changes to the existing Ohio Revised Code, in regards to the way that county central committees are formed. I believe that if this language is left in, it will indeed nullify the pre-existing text of Ohio Law.

The central text in question is as follows:

*(2) Each member of a controlling committee shall be a resident and qualified elector of this state and, except as otherwise provided in division (A)(3) of this section, shall be a resident and qualified elector of the district, ward, or precinct that the member is elected to represent. All 46009 46010 46011 46012 46013 (3) A county controlling committee may adopt a bylaw specifying that a person who is appointed to fill a vacancy on the committee under section 3517.05 of the Revised Code is not required to be a resident of the precinct the person is to represent, so long as the person is a resident of the township or municipal corporation in which the precinct is located. A member of a county controlling committee who is appointed pursuant to such a bylaw shall have the same duties and privileges as a member of the committee who resides in the precinct the member represents. A county controlling committee*

*that adopts such a bylaw shall file a copy of its updated constitution and bylaws with the board of elections. 46014 46015 46016 46017 46018 46019 46020 46021 46022 46023 46024 46025.*

In addition, this language raises several concerns for citizen led action groups, grass root conservatives and Republican party members alike. If this bill passes through the Senate, without the above-mentioned lines being removed, it will not only contradict the original text of Ohio law, but it can very easily sever relations, with the public, the voting precincts and their ability to stay informed, the pre-existing committee members, and their political parties. It will also disenfranchise many people who are trying to “get involved”. They may never get the same chance to run for these positions, because they may not have the same political connections. I say this because the proposed language grants party chairs the ability to appoint committee members outside the jurisdiction of the precinct. Given that one point alone, one could and should be very concerned about the dynamics of the party shifting to use of “proxy” votes and “ghost” voters in regards to party affairs.

In my personal opinion, it seems that the stage could be set for party chairs to appoint committee members who are loyal only to them, rather than the precinct or interests of the voters they are there to help represent. In this scenario, these positions will be rendered as selected, rather than elected positions.

Thankfully that does not seem to be the case in Mahoning County. We have maintained a good relationship with our party officers and we aim to keep it that way. We know how quickly these situations can spiral once the language of the constitution gets amended and rewritten.

Since I have only submitted the above as part of my written testimony. I am more than happy to answer any questions or talk openly about what I do as a precinct committee person, executive committee or the election integrity committee I serve on.

Thank you so much for your time.

Drew Carchedi

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