

May 26, 2023

From: Linda Larger, Member Franklin County Republican Central Committee
Re: HB 33 Proposed Amendment to ORC Section 3517.02-3517.03
Proposed change in the legal manner of filling vacancies on central committees

Mr. Chairman and Honorable Committee Members

It has come to my attention that a proposed change to the way political parties fill vacancies on central committees has been inserted into the current budget bill. This proposed change is completely misplaced in budget legislation inasmuch as the manner of filling central committees has nothing to do with funding the business of the State of Ohio. Further, the proposed method of filling vacancies on central committees is a solution for which there is no problem. As someone who is associated with members of central committees in several counties as well as the state central committee I have yet to hear even a hint of insistence for the type of change that is being proposed.

Under ORC 3517.02 All members of controlling committees of a major political party shall be elected by direct vote of the members of the party...

Each member of a controlling committee shall be a resident and qualified elector of the district, ward, or precinct that the member is elected to represent. (emphasis added)

The proposed change on page 1497, line 46001 through page 1500, line 46082 of HB 33 would eliminate this residency requirement and the principle of direct geographical representation. This change would diminish the very essence of the role and purpose of central committee members. Central committee members are the “roots” of grassroots election activity. Central Committee members have the important responsibility to endorse candidates for public office, recommend members to the county boards of elections, and make appointments to vacancies in public and party offices. Just as important as these roles and responsibilities, central committee members are also the point persons (the “roots” of grassroots) to the voting members of their political party in the geographic area they represent, be it a ward, precinct, township or village. This point person is hands on involved in distributing slate cards, campaign literature, yard signs, hosting candidate meet and greet events, recruiting poll workers, and whatever it takes to educate voters and encourage their party’s voter participation in the electoral process.

How do I do this? Central committee members are civic minded individuals by nature. We come together with our communities as members of civic and fraternal organizations, parent-teacher associations, in our houses of worship, in sports leagues, and all the ways people gather. When I ran for my seat on central committee it was “know and be known” that helped me win and makes me effective. It started with being active in my community civic association and the church I attend in my precinct. After I was elected, I had the opportunity to meet and get to know an even larger circle of voters who reside in my ward. I communicate with them through mailings at my personal expense. I have developed a group of helpers who distribute yard signs

and who are present on the day of elections outside polling locations in my ward to pass out slate cards. Getting to know the voters in my ward has also been useful in recruiting poll workers. I have established a unique email address for voters to reach me and I'm always available to help them with questions about voting and refer them to the Franklin County Board of Elections and Secretary of State when necessary.

If I do not reside in the district, ward, precinct, township or village which I represent, how could I effectively and knowledgeably do my job? The answer: I cannot!

Therefore, please see to it that this provision, attached to the budget bill (HB 33) now under consideration by the Ohio Senate Finance Committee, is REMOVED!

Thank you.