

May 30, 2023

Hava Laudon

Member, Madison County Republican Central Committee

Public Testimony Regarding House Bill 33 (appropriations)

Re: Proposed Amendment to ORC Section 3517.02-3517.03

Ohio Senate

General Government - Finance Committee

Hon. Matt Dolan, Chair

On the subject of a proposed change in the legal manner of Filling Vacancies on County Central Committees - [HB 33: page 1497, line 46001 through page 1500, line 46082].

Mister Chairman and Honorable Members of the Committee—

I rise today in objection to the amendment proposed in HB 33 on page 1497, line 46001 through page 1500, line 46082.

In the Declaration of Independence, our Founding Fathers stated that to secure our unalienable Rights to Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, "Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." This concept is fundamental to our Constitutional Republic.

One of the practical ways we implement this in Ohio is through County Central Committee seats.

These seats are an important part of a government which is "of, by, and for the people" and "deriving it's just powers from the consent of the governed." In our

current Ohio Revised Code, County Central Committee Members are to reside in the geographic area in which they run or are appointed. This is a tangible reflection of the representative government with which our Nation was founded.

The specificity of each County Central Committee member being a resident of the location they represent is important. Geographical communities tend to have specific cultural, ideological, economic, and moral make-ups. These individual differences having the power to express themselves politically is what makes our Country unique. County Central Committee seats are how we represent these communities. In addition, people tend to trust someone from their own community more than they trust someone from another area.

Allowing people from outside a precinct or ward to be appointed as County Central Committee members denies the sense of local community representation and decreases trust.

We understand that we as Citizens have a role to play. It is our right to demand this local representation, and many of us are willing to fill these roles ourselves; but for a while, we were unaware of the opportunity to serve on our County Central Committees as a means of helping our party succeed. However now, many concerned citizens want to be active and are getting involved. In the last election, my associates and I ran initiatives to encourage people to run for Central Committee Seats & pointed them to the resources do so.

We filled many seats.

These initiatives were public and widely known.

It is, in fact, a slap in the face to Ohio Citizens to have this attached to our state spending bill, especially after so many citizens stepped up to do their part. Our

party leaders should be putting more effort into encouraging people to participate in the opportunity and responsibility of running for these seats than to come up with a way to fill them with outside parties.

Since this issue has come up, we have discovered that Clermont County is not the only County where Party Leaders may have already filled seats in this way and in violation of our state code. This may hit closer to home than you know. Perhaps in all our County Parties we should pay closer attention to how appointments are made!

We are asking not only for you to remove this language from HB 33 but also to consider, at some future point, strengthening the existing law to ensure these violations of representative government and our state code are taken seriously & such violations stopped.

Abraham Lincoln is one of my favorite Presidents. His Gettysburg address was given during a time our nation was deeply divided. I am not comparing our time in history to that period, but I think we can all agree our nation is deeply divided at this moment in history.

President Lincoln presented a successful plan and way out of the division of that time & I believe the same plan will work for us today. In his address, he said:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal....

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here

highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

- Abraham Lincoln, November 19, 1863.

President Lincoln understood that division is squelched, and freedom proliferates when government not only remains close to the people but comes directly from them.

Mister Chair, Honorable Members of the Committee,
County Central Committee seats are one of the most practical applications we have of what President Lincoln was describing. To depart from our current ORC—to allow appointments of people who are not “of” or “by” the people is to depart from one of the most fundamental things that makes our Republic powerful—and puts us in danger of increased division and loss of freedom.

Please vote to amend HB 33, removing the proposed changes to Section 3517 of the Ohio Revised Code, and consider recommending sanctions so that Party Leaders can no longer violate the law without repercussions.