



December 12, 2023

General Government Committee
Ohio Senate
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Support for S.B. 137: Generally prohibit use of ranked-choice voting.

I am writing to strongly support Senator Gavarone's legislation prohibiting ranked-choice voting in Ohio elections. Elections are the most vital component of our system of government because it ensures our government is led by the people. Utilizing overly complex and unfamiliar voting systems erodes the most fundamental principle of our system: one person, one vote. Below, I outline some key concerns AMAC Action and our 2.1 million members, including 90,988 members in Ohio, have with ranked-choice voting.

- **Unnecessary Complexity:** Our current system's simplicity is its strongest feature; one person has one vote for one candidate for each open office. Ranked-choice voting does the opposite by forcing voters to choose multiple candidates, including some for whom they have little information, creating confusion. Ranked-choice voting is also more likely to lead to errors on the ballot, which creates systematic unfairness in the election.
- **Change leading to confusion:** Ohio has used the principle of one person, one vote for 220 years. Changing to a new, unnecessary system will confuse Ohio voters. Ranked-choice voting is a complex system that will disenfranchise voters who are unfamiliar with how to rank their choices. Voters should be confident in their elections; ranked-choice voting degrades that confidence.
- **Campaigns gaming the voting system:** Campaigns more familiar with the ranked-choice voting system will get supporters to vote strategically to reduce the likelihood of opponents making it through the tabulation rounds. A candidate favored by a large percentage of the electorate could see their rank voted lower because the second-place campaign urges their voters to do so, even if many of that candidate's supporters also support the first-place candidate. Gaming the system is unfair to the voters.
- **Increased costs for elections:** Ohio has and should continue to invest in secure voting technology; however, any election using ranked choice voting requires a much more significant investment in technology to help validate the rankings and recount the votes as candidates are removed. In addition to the technology costs, a massive voter

education campaign is necessary to inform voters of the new and different voting system.

- Ballot errors leading to contested elections: As previously mentioned, the increased complexity of ranked-choice voting leads to confusion for voters. Campaigns affected by the confusion have a solid case to make to their supporters that the voting system, not lack of support, caused them to lose. Already, we have seen the discord created when voters do not trust the integrity of their elections. Ranked-choice voting is not the appropriate method for ensuring fair and secure elections.

Ranked-choice voting is a solution in search of a problem. Ohio already has free and fair elections based on the principle of one person, one vote. As I have outlined in this written testimony, prohibiting ranked-choice voting is necessary to ensure Ohio's elections stay free and fair.

Thank you for considering this written testimony on this important matter, and I urge the committee to support S.B. 137.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Carlstrom". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bob Carlstrom
President
AMAC Action