

## **Proponent Testimony**

### **Senate Bill 173**

**April 24, 2024**

Chairman Peterson, Ranking Member DeMora and members of the Committee:

My name is Alex Linser, and I am the Deputy Director of Elections for Hamilton County Ohio. I submit the following testimony in my personal capacity. I do not write on behalf of the Ohio Association of Elections Officials or the Hamilton County Board of Elections.

I wish to thank this committee and the sponsors of this legislation for considering the safety of Ohio's election officials. In the years since the 2020 Presidential Election, election administration has been under increased scrutiny. While there are positives to that attention: Ohio's Election Officials are professionals who have a good story to tell about how we administer free and fair elections; there are also drawbacks. Election Officials have faced an increase in threats and harassment.

I myself have received threatening emails. While I am proud to contribute to the functioning of our Democracy, even in the face of such threats, I am grateful to the sponsors' consideration for the safety of me, my family, and my staff.

Election Officials are our neighbors. They train hard, work long hours, and wholly commit themselves to facilitating a fair process through which Ohioans can exercise their most fundamental of rights. The job is hard enough without fear for personal safety. These public servants provide critical services to our community and we ought to protect them. Extending the very same protections which Ohio law currently provides law enforcement professionals, is a simple and practical way to help protect Ohio's Election Officials. As a Husband, Father of 7, and a

leader of some of the hardest-working public servants in county government, I applaud the consideration of SB 173 and urge the committee to support it.

Thank you.

Alex Linser