

4th House District

Parts of NE Franklin County
Including Gahanna, New Albany,
Westerville, Columbus, Jefferson,
Plain, and other area Townships

**Committees**

Children & Human Services
Education
Finance
Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review
Workforce & Higher Education
Ranking Member

**Representative Beryl Brown Piccolantonio
4th House District**

Testimony to the House General Government Committee
House Bill 197
June 3, 2025

Chair Ray, Vice Chair LeRe, Ranking Member Brent, and members of the House General Government Committee, thank you for inviting Representative Troy and me to provide sponsor testimony for House Bill 197. Thank you also to Rep. Troy for including me as a joint sponsor of this bill this General Assembly.

House Bill 197 would establish a consistent date – the first Tuesday after the first Monday in May – for all primary elections in Ohio. This would bring predictability to Ohio’s election calendar by aligning with the primary date in presidential and non-presidential election years. Standardizing the election date would benefit our state’s voters, election administrators, and candidates.

Historically, Ohio’s presidential primary date has been inconsistent, ranging from March 2 in 2004 to March 19 in 1996. Primary Elections already have lower turnout than General Elections. Each of us in this room right now and watching on the Ohio Channel is unquestionably very attuned to the electoral process and may find it difficult to imagine letting any election –no matter the date or what is on the ballot—pass by without us voting. However, not everyone is in this category and bringing uniformity to our election dates would ensure that everyone is better able to participate in the political process.

Ohio’s 88 Boards of Elections are experts at administering free, fair, and efficient elections. The uncertainty and confusion surrounding Ohio’s presidential primary elections in recent years have greatly hindered the crucial work of local election boards and poll workers. Running an election is a massive task. Each election, thousands of election workers must be hired in order to fully staff more than 3,000 polling locations. By making election dates uniform, House Bill 197 would support our local boards of election in hiring election staff and procuring polling places.

Finally, this change would ensure that elected officials spend more time on governing and less time on electoral politics. For us as State Representatives with two-year terms, this is especially the case, as the difference in two months between March and May means spending significantly more of our terms legislating rather than campaigning.

I hope that you will support House Bill 197 in order to address the concerns caused by uncertain election dates. This improvement to our electoral process would be a testament to America’s unwavering commitment to democracy

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.