**William P. DeMora**
State Senator
25th Senate District

**Committees:**
Public Utilities - *Ranking*
Ways and Means - *Ranking*
Energy
Financial Institutions, Insurance, and Technology
General Government
Government Oversight and Reform

Chair Ray, Vice Chair LaRe, Ranking Member Brent, members of the House General Government committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in support of Senate Bill 63.

Senate Bill 63 is simple: it would withhold state funds from municipalities if they adopt ranked choice voting. This system is a disaster waiting to happen—expensive, confusing, and time-consuming. The issues aren't just hypothetical; they've been proven in cities across the country. We don't need to make the same mistakes here in Ohio.

The first problem with ranked choice voting I want to talk about is just how confusing it is. A great example of this problem is Arlington, Virginia. In 2023, Local lawmakers voted to institute ranked choice voting for their county Board Primaries this spring. Officials estimated that it would take upwards of $50,000 to inform voters, and after the election, voters still said they were confused and didn't understand the process. Election workers said that the process was confusing and added a tremendous amount of work onto their already difficult jobs. The candidate that got the most votes in the initial vote didn't even get the nomination! After their last two elections, the county board sent out feedback requests from the community. The forms asked a variety of questions about voter's experiences with ranked-choice voting. The results showed that people who ranked that they had a "negative" experience using ranked-choice voting rose 9% and when asked to rank ranked-choice voting on a scale from 1 to 100. The average score was 52. That's not just a bad grade, it's a loud, clear message: people don't like ranked-choice voting.

The next example I want to highlight, and perhaps the most telling, is Portland's recent city elections. Portland introduced ranked choice voting for its city races. With 52 candidates running for city council and 19 for mayor, voters were faced with ballots that were four pages long! Unsurprisingly, this confusion led to nearly 50,000 Portlanders not casting a single vote for a city council candidate. The mayoral race was no better, with more than 20,000 Portlanders not voting for any candidate. Tens of thousands of voices were left unheard because the system overwhelmed them and left them uninformed. That is not conjecture either, the Portland city auditor did a research report on the election and said "Portland's high number of candidates caused voters to feel overwhelmed" and continued by saying "Those voters who reported skipping a contest on the ballot said they felt underinformed about the candidates running and/or that their vote wouldn't matter." and I can't blame them! I would consider myself pretty plugged into politics, and I certainly couldn't rank 52 candidates in order of preference, why should we expect the average Bob and Betty Buckeye to be able to do so! They have jobs, families, and lives to focus on.

As you all know, my day job is running campaigns, and if I were to run a campaign where there are 4 candidates, and one candidate gets 45%, one gets 30%, one gets 15, and one gets 10, I'd expect each of us to agree that the first candidate with 45% of the vote won. That's a clear victory. No one here today would be upset if they won their next election by 15%, but using ranked choice voting, that candidate could very easily lose. Ranked choice voting is so inefficient that the DNC is forbidding any state that has not yet used ranked choice voting from using it for their presidential primary. It is also outwardly skeptical of those states that have used it in the past and making them go through hoops to prove it.

Municipalities that want to implement ranked-choice voting will have to spend tens of thousands of dollars educating voters, money most don't have. It's not fair to voters, it's not fair to election workers, and it's certainly not fair to candidates who work tirelessly to build a coalition of supporters only to lose under a system that doesn't make sense. This isn't democracy. Democracy is about clear, decisive results, about supporting your candidate, working to help them win, and living with the outcome. Ranked-choice voting is trying to play both sides, and it just doesn't work.

Thank you. I'm happy to answer any questions.

Ohio Senate| 1 Capitol Square Columbus, OH 43215 | (614) 466-4583 | DeMora@ohiosenate.gov