



Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association

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House Bill 96 – As Passed by the House

Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources

Interested Party Testimony

May 14, 2025

Chairman Schaffer, Vice-Chair Koehler, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide written Interested Party testimony on the provisions of House Bill 96 that would transfer some of the responsibilities of the Ohio Elections Commission to our local boards of elections.

Our Association shares the concerns of the Ohio Association of Elections Officials regarding the impact of this legislation on our boards of elections and county prosecutor offices. One of the complaints that we heard expressed by some members of the House expressed about the Ohio Elections Commission was that the commission is comprised of non-lawyers who are tasked with making legal decisions about elections law violations. Transferring the responsibilities of the Elections Commission to local boards of elections will not change this dynamic since most members of the boards are also non-lawyers. Because of this, county prosecutors, as legal counsel for the boards, are likely to end up playing a large role advising the boards about and during proceedings.

In addition, we believe transferring this authority to local boards of elections will result in an increased number of complaints compared to the Elections Commission. People are likely to feel more comfortable filing a complaint with a local board, whose member they may know, than they are with a state entity like the Elections Commission.

All of this will create new responsibilities and new workload for the boards of elections and our county prosecutors without any new resources to take this work on. Without additional resources, this will take time and resources away from prosecuting current criminal matters and from our traditional role as legal counsel to our county and township officials and county boards.

Given these concerns, we respectfully request that the transfer of Elections Commission responsibilities to our boards of elections be removed from House Bill 96. If the Ohio Elections Commission is to be abolished its responsibilities should be transferred to another state entity, like the Secretary of State, that is funded by the General Assembly and that the General Assembly can equip to handle to handle the workload.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.