



**Testimony John H. Merrill, Senior Advisor Secure Elections Project
Senate Bill 63
Ohio General Government Committee
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Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear and members of the Senate General Government Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on Senate Bill 63, legislation that would prohibit ranked-choice voting.

Ranked-choice voting (RCV) is a complicated and expensive process that adds uncertainty to our elections, especially when voters already face many doubts. Although I am certain it is well-intentioned, RCV has been implemented in several other states and has yielded poor results. In some cases, it has directly resulted in disastrous elections, and in others, voters have consistently expressed their disapproval for the system by voting it down via referenda.

Election workers and the officials responsible for overseeing our elections already face serious challenges: declining public trust in the vote, threats and harassment targeting election workers, outdated election infrastructure, and more. By codifying that Ohio will not adopt RCV, we can take a substantive, sensible step toward stabilizing our elections in this time of political uncertainty and polarization.

While serving as the Secretary of State of Alabama from 2015 through 2023, I was responsible for overseeing the state's election procedures. Over the eight years that I was in office, we had eight convictions of voter fraud, which was more than any other state in the nation per capita, and breaking voter registration and voter participation records in every election cycle. At the same time, we maintained reasonable standards for access to the polls, ensuring all eligible citizens of our state were legally able to vote, without arbitrary or unreasonable barriers being placed before them.

This is the kind of approach that should inform our thinking around RCV, and it is in this spirit that I offer several core arguments for Senate Bill 63:

- **RCV is unnecessarily confusing and makes voting harder.** Voters have reported [not understanding](#) RCV's specifics, and the process is confusing for those who are used to simply choosing the best candidate. There has also been an [increase in errors](#) in places where it has been implemented, which can result in ballots being thrown out.
- **RCV is too expensive.** States that implement RCV are often forced to secure new vendors because the existing firms do not have the technical capability for it, creating additional costs for taxpayers. For example, Idaho Secretary of State Phil McGrane has [warned](#) that implementing RCV would cost his state \$40 million.
- **RCV has been tried, and it has failed, sometimes catastrophically.** The counting and re-allocation process has caused significant delays in several states, resulting in voters

not knowing who a winner is for days or weeks in some cases. For example, after New York City implemented RCV for its mayoral election, it took [two weeks](#) for the city to determine the winner.

Voters have made clear they don't want RCV. In states where it has been introduced as a ballot measure, the voters have overwhelmingly [rejected](#) RCV. During the 2024 cycle alone, RCV ballot measures failed in five states, including red, blue, and purple states. I have observed through my experience as a Secretary of State and as a voter that many people have doubts about our elections process. The last thing we need right now is for Ohio to unnecessarily introduce a new, complicated, and expensive system that makes voting and the elections process difficult and uncertain.

RCV has been tried and tested, and it has proven ineffective. Let's take the common-sense step of protecting Ohio voters from it. I respectfully encourage you to support Senate Bill 63. Thank you for your time, and I welcome your questions.