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WRITTEN/VERBAL OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF DEBBIE SCHAFFNER
Constituent of Ohio Senate District 20

Hearing on Senate Bill No. 63, "Generally Prohibit The Use of Ranked Choice Voting"

Chair Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear and members of the Senate General Government Committee:

My name is Debbie Schaffner, a constituent from Fairfield County and an elected council member in the Village of Baltimore. Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on Senate Bill 63, legislation that would prohibit Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). This Senate bill says, "it's your constitutional right to implement Ranked Choice Voting but if you do we're going to punish you".

In my retirement years, I became active in volunteering with pro-democracy organizations and am a major supporter of RCV. I started volunteering for Rank the Vote Ohio in 2023, and since then I've had the opportunity to talk to literally thousands of Ohio voters about RCV and have found that Ohio voters are not only interested in implementing RCV, but excited to know that there is an electoral reform available to them that will make them feel as if their voice is heard.

I'd like to briefly address a few arguments that were made in the sponsor testimony.

1. It violates "one-person one-vote". "One-person, one-vote" is a legal rule that one person's voting power ought to be roughly equivalent to another person's within the same state. With RCV, everyone has the same opportunity to rank as many candidates as they wish. In fact, the US Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decided in *Dudum v Arntz* (2011) that RCV did NOT violate "one-person one-vote". The US District Court of Maine concluded in *Baber v Dunlap* (2018) that "one-person one-vote" does not stand in opposition to ranked balloting".

2. On that same note, it's been noted that there is evidence of "exhausted" votes where voters may not rank all the candidates and somehow this has been interpreted as a "failure" for those voters. While educating voters on RCV, I am often asked, "do you have to rank everyone"? The answer is no. There are simply some voters who just don't want to offer a vote – even a last place vote – for a certain candidate. That is

not a fail. It is a CHOICE, which is also the foundation of Ranked Choice Voting. The opportunity to vote for a candidate in the final round is open to everyone.

I read in the March 3 testimony of Heartland Impact that “Ranked Choice Voting makes it harder to vote because “your constituents are forced to learn about every candidate for each race...”. I’m going to go out on a limb right now and tell you that I think RCV is the better method BECAUSE constituents will know more about every candidate and can make informed decisions.

I looked back at testimony from last years Senate Bill 137 as well as the proponent testimony for the current bill. The combined total of unique proponent testimony submissions for both bills was 13, twelve of which came from out of state special interest groups and one from an elected official.

On the other hand, I counted 50 letters on the opposing side of this issue from SB 137 alone. 11 came from organizations, 7 of them based in Ohio, including the League of Women Voters. 39 of the letters came from Ohio voters.

Out of state special interest groups are concerned that RCV is “just too hard”. Based on demographics of the testimony, it seems Ohio is ready and willing to take it on.

This room is where the power of the people of Ohio reside, whether you are a Democrat or a Republican. Everyone behind that desk was elected to be accountable to the people of Ohio, not to partisan special interest groups from out of state.

I’ve heard Senator DeMora state that there are Republicans and Democrats that aren’t on board with RCV. He’s right. The Republican party doesn’t like it. The Democratic party doesn’t like it. Why? Because it doesn’t benefit either party. It benefits the voters. And it will benefit all Ohio voters, the voters you represent.

This issue should be decided by those Ohio voters, not out of state special interest groups. Let the people decide.