

March 25, 2025

Chris Anderson
6025 Nicholas Glen
Columbus, OH 43213

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

I am here today to give opposition testimony to Senate Bill 63. I am a supporter and advocate for instant runoffs through Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). I have spent a considerable amount of time learning about it and discussing it with friends and fellow Ohio citizens. I believe it is a better election system than our current single-vote plurality-wins system. I would like to emphasize the fact that RCV is a **valid, proven** method of running elections as evidenced by the fact that it has been used successfully in many countries for decades. It is also being used successfully throughout the United States in many municipalities and by the states of Maine and Alaska.

RCV has several advantages over our current system; one of the primary advantages is that it addresses the following glaring problem with our current election system. With our current single-vote, plurality-wins system, the candidate who is the **least** favorite of the **majority** of voters can get elected. This happens when a candidate appeals to a dedicated base of supporters that earns that candidate a plurality but not a majority of votes.

As I'm sure you all are aware, SB63 is not the first RCV ban bill introduced by the Ohio Senate. In September 2023, this committee introduced another RCV ban bill – SB137 – with sponsor testimony.

In December 2023, the committee held a 2nd hearing on SB 137. According to the legislature.ohio.gov website, 12 people provided proponent testimony. All 12 are listed as being associated with an organization; no one offered testimony as "Self". The list of organizations represented by the proponents includes names such as "Honest Elections Project", "Heartland Impact", and "Heritage Action For America". I did a little web research on these organizations by going to their websites and attempting to find their primary location. 9 of the 12 listed locations in other states. 2 did not list a location (that I could find). And one showed several office locations including one in Ohio. I suspect that most of the testifiers were paid employees of the organization for which they work.

In contrast, on February 21, 2024, the committee held a 3rd hearing on SB 137 and 46 people gave **opponent** testimony. Of those 46, 17 are listed as being associated with

an organization, and 29 gave testimony only as themselves (listed as “Self” on the legislature.ohio.gov website). I believe that the vast majority of people who provided this opponent testimony were doing it on their own time and were not compensated for their testimony.

On April 24, 2024, the committee held a 4th hearing on SB 137 and 18 people gave **opponent** testimony. Of the 18, 14 were from people who had not previously given testimony.

Switching from SB137 to its new incarnation, SB63, the Committee held a hearing for proponent testimony on March 4th. Again, all testifiers – 5 of them – represented special interest groups, mostly a subset of the 12 proponents of SB137.

One might construe this data on SB137 and SB63 to suggest that a limited number – a dozen or so – of out-of-state special interest groups are supporting the banning of RCV, while a larger number – more than 60 – of people consisting of mostly Ohio citizens who have taken the time to educate themselves on RCV’s benefits are expressing their support for RCV. I ask the committee: Who are you listening to: special interest groups or Ohio citizens?

Taking a step back from the data, I ask the committee “Why are you attempting to place this ban on cities and municipalities in Ohio?” Do you think you know better than they do how to run an election? This belief is paternalistic and presumptuous at best and arrogant and dictatorial at worst.

I’d also like to address one particular argument that RCV opponents raise and that is the question of the “one person one vote” principle. I find this particular argument mystifying because I believe RCV supports the principle **better** than our current system. With RCV, each voter’s ballot is counted equally, regardless of their ranking preferences. Each voter casts only one ballot. Although voters rank their choices, they have **exactly** one vote that counts toward the final result. When counting votes, the process ensures that each vote is counted **equally** in each round. If a voter’s top choice is eliminated, their vote is transferred to their next preferred candidate. This means every voter’s ballot continues to be part of the counting process until one candidate achieves the majority.

US Courts have found that RCV does not violate the “one person, one vote” principle. In *Dudum v. Arntz*¹, *Minnesota Voters Alliance v. City of Minneapolis*², and *McSweeney v. City of Cambridge*³, courts have ruled each voter’s ballot has been counted equally.

In summary, I encourage the committee to listen to the Ohio citizens who are expressing their support for RCV and drop this unnecessary, misguided, and unconstitutional⁴ bill.

Proponent testifiers for SB137 on 12/12/2023:

Witness	Organization	Address on website
Jason Snead	Honest Elections Project	Washington DC
Cameron Sholty	Heartland Impact	Arlington Heights, IL
Frank Strigari	Opportunity Solutions Project	Tallahassee, FL
Gina Swoboda	Voter Reference Foundation	Unknown Bohemia, NY; Leesburg, FL; Albuquerque, NM; Washington DC
Bob Carlstrom	AMAC Action	Addresses in several states including Ohio
Kenneth Blackwell	America First Policy Institute	Washington DC
Scott Walter	Capital Research	Washington DC
Chad Ennis	Honest Elections Project	Washington DC
Harry Roth	Stop Ranked-Choice Voting coalition	Unknown
Ken Cuccinelli	Election Transparency Initiative	Arlington, VA
Catherine Gunsalus	Heritage Action for America	Washington DC
Lori Roman	American Constitutional Rights Union Action Fund	Naples FL

¹**Dudum v. Arntz (2011):** The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit upheld San Francisco's use of RCV, stating that it did not violate the "one person, one vote" principle. The court found that RCV ensures that each voter has an equal opportunity to participate in the electoral process and that their vote is counted equally.

²**Minnesota Voters Alliance v. City of Minneapolis (2009):** The Minnesota Supreme Court upheld the use of RCV in Minneapolis, ruling that it did not violate the "one person, one vote" principle. The court concluded that RCV provides an equal opportunity for all voters to express their preferences and that each vote is counted equally.

³**McSweeney v. City of Cambridge (1996):** The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court upheld the use of RCV in Cambridge, finding that it did not violate the "one person, one vote" principle. The court determined that RCV ensures that each voter's ballot is counted equally and that the system provides a fair and equitable method of electing representatives

⁴Article XVIII (18), Section 7 of Ohio’s Constitution states “Any municipality may frame and adopt or amend a charter for its government and may, subject to the provisions of section 3 of this article, exercise thereunder all powers of local self-government.”