

March 25, 2025

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

Thanks for considering my testimony. My name is Chuck Soder, and I'm here to express my opposition to Senate Bill 63.

So ... I took the day off work for this. And drove down from Rocky River. And that's because I'm really, really worried about political polarization. You may know that polarization in Congress is higher today than it's been since the Civil War.

But it goes way beyond DC. These days many people won't even date someone across party lines. And it's changing the way our politicians act – even at the local level.

It really, really bothers me. So I've spent a ton of time over the past several years reading books about polarization, trying to figure out how to reverse the trend. That's how I learned about Ranked Choice Voting. I truly believe it's part of the solution. Because when a candidate has to win over an actual majority of voters, you get serious candidates who reflect that majority.

For instance, Virginia Republicans used Ranked Choice to nominate Glenn Youngkin – who became the state's first Republican governor in more than a decade.

But without Ranked Choice ... you can end up with someone like this guy: former Ohio Congressional candidate JR Majewski.



This guy wears QAnon shirts ... and he thinks that red states should secede from the United States.

Yet he still won his primary. How did that happen? Well, he ran against three other people. Some of them were serious, highly qualified candidates. But they split the sanity vote and he won with 36% ... which never would've happened if we had Ranked Choice Voting.

Naturally, he lost the general election to Marcy Kaptur ... by 13 points.

Now ... back to the local level. I live in Northeast Ohio, but I'm a child of I-75. I'm from Wapakoneta. And I've lived in Sidney, Troy and Bowling Green (aka, the home of Mister Spots).

So I know that people in different cities have different ways of doing things. If a town doesn't want Ranked Choice Voting, I get it.

That's what Home Rule is for!

Here in Ohio we've respected Home Rule for more than a century. We all know that local governments should make local decisions. Otherwise we'd just let the federal government do everything.

But Senate Bill 63 disrespects that tradition. It also disrespects local voters. It treats them like children who can't make their own decisions.

If you're a bit apprehensive about Ranked Choice, that's OK. Though Australia has used it for 100 years, it would be new to most Ohio voters. I just ask you to let cities test it out on a smaller scale and see what works best. That's how innovation works.

Of course, we already know that voters elsewhere like it. Thirteen different exit polls prove it. Heck, Utah Valley University did a study showing that *94% of Utah voters* said they were satisfied with Ranked Choice Voting.

But if Ohio cities try it and don't like it, they can go back to the old way. Let's let the market decide.

Thanks for your time.

Chuck Soder