

**Testimony of Councilman Jim Petras**

Opposing SB 63 – A Ban on Ranked Choice Voting

Chairman Rulli, Vice Chair Lang, Ranking Member DeMora, and members of the Senate General Government Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 63, which seeks to prohibit Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in Ohio. My name is Jim Petras, and I serve as a member of the Cleveland Heights City Council. I urge you to reject SB 63 and allow local governments the flexibility to consider election methods that best serve their communities.

Ranked Choice Voting is a proven, nonpartisan electoral system that enhances voter choice, promotes majority support, and discourages negative campaigning. By allowing voters to rank candidates in order of preference, RCV ensures that elected officials are chosen with broad support rather than through plurality outcomes that may not reflect the true will of the electorate.

Cities and states across the country, including jurisdictions with diverse political landscapes, have successfully implemented RCV to great effect. It has been shown to reduce “spoiler” concerns, improve voter engagement, and foster a more representative democracy. Instead of discouraging its use, Ohio should empower municipalities with the ability to explore innovative electoral reforms that best meet the needs of their constituents.

Cleveland Heights and other Ohio communities deserve the right to determine how we conduct our elections. A blanket ban on RCV ignores the potential benefits and unnecessarily restricts local self-governance. Home rule is a cornerstone of Ohio’s political framework, and SB 63 infringes upon the ability of cities to tailor election systems to their unique needs.

I urge this committee to reject SB 63 and allow Ohio communities the freedom to explore election methods that promote fairness, engagement, and greater voter satisfaction. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

**Jim Petras**

Councilman, Cleveland Heights City Council