March 24, 2025

Christopher R. Bindel
1212 Hathaway Ave
Lakewood, OH 44107

Hearing on Senate Bill 63, "Generally Prohibit The Use of Ranked Choice Voting"

Chairperson Roegner, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, and members of the committee:

Thank you for taking time to review my testimony on S.B. 63. I am writing to strongly oppose S.B. 63. I reviewed the proponent testimony and I found it troubling that all of it came from special interest groups from outside the state. Meanwhile, claims were being made that only special interest groups were pushing for Rank Choice Voting (RCV) in Ohio. I am here to state this is simply not the case. I am a lifelong Ohioan, husband and father that has a day job that has nothing to do with public policy or politics. I am a voter and constituent who finds it very troubling that the Statehouse is expressing the wish to pass a bill with such overreach. This bill is an attack on home rule. Its punishment of withholding Local Government Funds to any municipality that adopts RCV goes beyond the intent of the cited precedent, and it seems unlikely it would be upheld. Federal courts have upheld the constitutionality of RCV in several cases and the Ohio Supreme Court has regularly affirmed "the state may not restrict the exercise of the powers of self-government within a city."

I found it distressing when one of the proponent testimonies said that a downside to RCV is that it requires voters to learn about all the candidates, so they know how to rank them. It should be a given that voters learn and know about who they are voting for. Our vote is sacred and everyone should pick who they think is the best, and in the case of RCV, rank them in the order they agree with them. No one should be depending on a party or special interest group to tell them who to vote for and leave it at that.

Likewise, the idea that people would be forced to vote for anyone they do not like is ridiculous. With RCV you can pick just one person if you want, but have the ability to rank as many as you want. If there are five candidates on the ballot and you only like two, you only have to rank those two. No one is being forced to rank the remaining three they don't like. As for the claims that this leaves ballots open to being exhausted, if neither of the people they chose makes it out of the first two rounds, I would say the same is true in our current plurality voting. If you don't pick the winner, your vote is in a sense exhausted as well. This system does not change the idea of "one person, one vote" either. In the end, each person has one vote counted and every person has the same chance as before to have their candidate win or lose.

As a student of history (University of Toledo, B.S. History 2008) I find it laughable that one of the concerns with RCV is that it might delay the results of an election. Historically we used to have to wait weeks or even months for full clear results of an election. Today we get election results

usually within hours, but as the 2020 election shows, it can sometimes still take longer. Despite that, and our modern need for haste in everything, delays in RCV elections have been very rare and limited. Results are almost always available the next day, just like every other election. All our voting systems have computer components to them which makes counting and tabulating, including the adjustments made in RCV, almost instant. If there is a delay, it is unlikely to be because of RCV.

Speaking of counting votes. There was a lot of talk about how expensive and difficult it would be to switch to RCV. First of all, all voting machines in Ohio are capable of processing RCV ballots. They might require a software update which likely has some cost to it, but it is much lower than having to replace or purchase new voting machines. Also, if RCV is done right, you will likely save much more money by reducing the number of primaries and runoff elections, which can carry pretty high costs. As for the cost of education campaigns, I don't think there will be much educating required. Some, sure, but ballots come with instructions and everyone has ranked things in our lives, whether personally or on a survey. RCV is no different. The claims that RCV is confusing or complicated is ludacris. According to exit polling and studies in places where it has been adopted most have found it easy and prefer it to traditional plurality voting. In Maine's first RCV election in 2020 90% of voters reported their experience as "excellent" or "good" and 95% of New York voters found it easy in 2021. There has also been no statistical increase in ballot errors. And despite what was said during proponent testimony, RCV actually has been shown to [increase voter turnout](#).

I ask you to please consider my testimony, and that of others, actually from Ohio, and vote NO on this harmful and unnecessary bill. Thank you again for your time and reading my testimony.

Sincerely,
Christopher Bindel