



ADAMS COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY
Aaron E. Haslam

Testimony of Aaron E. Haslam

Adams County Prosecutor
Member, Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association (OPAA)

Before the Senate General Government Committee on Senate Bill 4

RE: Opposition to provisions of the Election Integrity Unit

Chairwoman Roegner, Vice-Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Blackshear, Jr. , and
Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony opposing selected provisions of Senate Bill 4 pertaining to Election Integrity Unit within the Ohio Secretary of State's Office.

As the elected Prosecutor for Adams County and a member of the OPAA, I urge this Committee to remove these provisions from the final version of Senate Bill 4. The proposed framework raises serious concerns regarding the balance of prosecutorial discretion, the integrity of law enforcement procedures, and the unnecessary creation of arbitrary statutory timelines.

An Arbitrary and Unbalanced 12-Month Prosecution Window

The amendment imposes a rigid 12-month deadline on county prosecutors to prosecute, request more evidence, or decline in writing. No similar restriction is placed on the Attorney General's Office if the matter is referred to them. There is no justification for placing such an artificial limit on local prosecutors—particularly when complex or sensitive investigations may reasonably require more than a year to resolve.

If time constraints are not imposed on state prosecutors, they should not be imposed on county prosecutors either. The disparate treatment is unfair and risks undermining meaningful, thorough case review at the local level.

Misclassification of the Election Integrity Unit as an Investigative Authority

The Secretary of State's Office is not a law enforcement agency and does not possess the training, experience, or statutory authority of professional investigative bodies like county sheriffs or police departments. Yet, under this amendment, prosecutors would be forced to refer matters back to the Election Integrity Unit rather than to their local law enforcement partners.



This restriction is inconsistent with the longstanding, effective model of collaboration between prosecutors and local law enforcement. Prosecutors must retain the discretion to refer cases to the appropriate investigative agency—particularly those agencies embedded within the communities where alleged violations occurred.

Special Treatment Without Justification

This proposal singles out election-related allegations for a level of statutory priority not afforded to any other category of criminal offense—not murder, not human trafficking, not child abuse, not narcotics cases. No compelling rationale has been offered as to why election law violations should be elevated above these other serious offenses.

Selective prioritization risks distorting prosecutorial resources and could be perceived as politicizing what should be a neutral criminal justice process.

Unnecessary Bureaucracy and Duplicative Reporting Requirements

The required annual reporting to the Governor and General Assembly adds administrative overhead without improving public accountability. The same data could be reported through existing channels or systems without creating a duplicative reporting structure within a new state bureaucracy.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that this Committee remove the Election Integrity Unit language from Senate Bill 4. The proposed structure is unnecessary, undermines local prosecutorial authority, limits flexibility in case management, and promotes inefficient duplication of investigative efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,



Aaron E. Haslam
Adams County Prosecutor