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Senate Bill 10 Sponsor Testimony
House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee
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Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Minority Member Clyde, distinguished members of the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on Senate Bill 10, which would save taxpayers money by eliminating wasteful and superfluous uncontested primaries. This legislation would also provide increased efficiency by eliminating uncontested, unnecessary congressional special primary elections, like what recently transpired in the eighth congressional district. Last general assembly this legislation, formerly Senate Bill 347, was reported by the State and Local Government committee with unanimous support and passed the Senate by a vote of 33-0 with unanimous, bipartisan support on November 29, 2016.

Current law, pursuant to R.C. § 3513.02 and § 3513.30, requires primaries to be held when two or more people file to run for an office, even if only one candidate remains on the ballot after a last-minute withdrawal by other candidates. Senate Bill 10 attempts to address this problem. Under this bill, the need for a primary would not be triggered by the number of candidates *who file*, but instead by the number of candidates *who are certified as a candidate*. This much needed reform would ensure that primary elections would no longer be required when one or more candidates of any party die, withdraw, or become disqualified when the number of remaining nominees is equivalent to the number of candidates allowed for that party and office.

Similarly, R.C. § 3513.312 requires that a special primary election be held to fill a vacancy in a party nomination if the person nominated as a congressional candidate withdraws from the race or dies more than ninety days before the general election. This special primary election is required even if one candidate files and the race is uncontested. The state must pay for all of the costs associated with this election. This legislation would remove the requirement for this unnecessary and costly election and instead would give the Secretary of State the responsibility to declare the sole remaining candidate as the nominee.

The bill's proposed modifications to R.C. § 3513.02 and § 3513.30 are supported by the bipartisan Ohio Association of Election Officials. Recently, Secretary of State Jon Husted called for the General Assembly to review R.C. § 3513.312 in light of the eighth congressional district's uncontested special primary election, which forced the state of Ohio to spend more than \$340,000 in taxpayer money. These commonsense reforms will provide greater efficiency in the administration of our elections and remove an unnecessary financial burden placed on our local communities, and the state, resulting in significant savings for Ohio's taxpayers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.