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Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chairman Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the House Committee on State and Local Government, thank you for the opportunity to come before you and testimony on behalf of House Bill 331. This bill aims to prevent fraud and enhance the requirements placed on candidates and office holders pertaining to the appointment of their campaign treasurers. This legislation will require each campaign treasurer to sign a notarized document declaring their intent to serve in that capacity.

Every candidate for office must have a named campaign treasurer on file. Their role is to keep a strict accounting of the campaign's contributions and expenditures and to file periodic reports on campaign activity. Right now, a candidate files a form with the Secretary of State's office with the name of their treasurer but without any required acknowledgment from the declared individual that they accept this role.

This bill requires the treasurer sign a notarized declaration indicating that they knowingly and willingly accept this position. This simple change erases any doubt that the individual named in this roll accepts the responsibilities of treasurer.

Recently, a political campaign was the victim of fraud when a consultant allegedly embezzled thousands of dollars from his campaign coffers. The perpetrator is accused of filing forms declaring his father as the campaign's treasurer. Because there are no required checks, the father was enlisted for a role he wasn't aware of, thereby allowing for the consultant to have total access to campaign accounts.

This scenario could have been easily avoided by requiring a notarized form in the first place. While this particular campaign's case was not a state issue, it brought to my attention that it could easily happen here. We need to act now before someone else commits fraud -- this time against a local or state candidate.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony, I urge you to favorably pass HB 331. I am happy to take any questions from the committee.