

Proponent Testimony
HB 487
Ohio Association of Election Officials

Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Maharath and members of the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee:

My name is Terry Burton and I am Director of the Wood County Board of elections and legislative co-chair of the Ohio Association of Election Officials (OAEO). I am here to offer the support of OAEO for HB 487, sponsored by Representative Tom Young.

OAEO is the non-profit, bipartisan organization that represents Ohio's 88 county boards of elections. Our bipartisan board of trustees, consisting of ten Democrats and ten Republicans voted unanimously to support HB 487, and we thank former Montgomery County Board of Elections Member and State Representative Tom Young for his leadership on this issue.

The term "common sense reform" gets thrown around a lot in the halls of the Ohio Statehouse, but in the case of HB 487, it is truly applicable. HB 487 is not the most exciting or controversial elections bill the committee will deal with this year, but it is important and impactful nonetheless. It is the type of blocking and tackling legislation that can assist boards of elections in operating more efficiently and effectively. Specifically, HB 487 would:

- Allow out-of-state ballot printers to compete for Ohio business.
 - Current law precludes out of state printers from bidding on work. Expanding the pool of eligible printers will drive innovation and drive down costs through increased competition.

- Reduce the bid bond required for bidders from 200% of the cost of the proposal to 10% of the cost of the proposal.
 - Archaic Ohio law artificially drives up the cost of ballot printing through exorbitant bonding requirements. HB 487 brings bid bonds for ballots in line with other public procurement statutes.
- Allow boards to award contracts based on “lowest and best” responses.
 - In recent years ballot printing has moved away from a commodity and towards a service. Boards now often contract for both the printing of ballots and envelopes as well as the stuffing and mailing of those ballots which can automate the process and creates efficiencies. These services need to be evaluated on both quality and price, and HB 487 creates this flexibility.
- Require the Secretary of State to establish rules and security standards for ballot printers.
 - As the printing industry evolves to encompass more than just the commodity of ballots, standards for cybersecurity, physical security and service need to be developed for ballot printers. These rules will provide assurance to boards and the public that companies printing ballots in Ohio meet high standards in all these areas, similar to the standards established for voting machines and electronic poll books.

To summarize, HB 487 will create greater competition in the ballot printing industry while simultaneously raising standards for those companies who would seek to do business in Ohio. It gives boards the necessary flexibility to choose a ballot printer that best suits the needs of their local communities.

Madam Chair, I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.