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43rd House District  
Toledo (p) | Ottawa Hills

Standing Committees  
Transportation, Ranking Member;  
Behavioral Health;  
Finance;  
Government Oversight;  
Public Health Policy;  
Economic & Workforce Development

**Michele Grim**  
State Representative

## **Before the House Government Oversight Committee**

### **House Bill 467 – Creates an exemption to candidate disclosure of name change**

#### **Sponsor testimony provided by Representative Michele Grim**

**April 9, 2024**

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey and my fellow members of the Government Oversight committee, thank you so much for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony for House Bill 467. I would also like to thank my joint-sponsor, Representative Brown Piccolantonio, who has hit the ground running since her time joining the House and brought this issue to our attention.

My joint sponsor did a fantastic job of explaining how this bill would work to solve the issue at hand but, how did this come to our attention? Up until this most recent election many candidates were virtually unaware of this rarely enforced rule.

Across the state the candidacies of at least 3 candidates were challenged after their legal name was included on their petitions, but not the name they had used in the past. In the transgender community this is most commonly referred to as a “dead name”.

While all candidates were questioned under the same rule, each county board of elections approached the situation in a different way. In Stark County this resulted in a candidate being disqualified from running. In other counties the candidates were able to move forward.

While House Bill 467 and the legislative fix it presents will clarify the rules for any candidate who has used a different name in the past, this obscure rule is clearly a much bigger barrier for candidates from the transgender community. Especially when the rule is being enforced and regulated using a wide variety of standards depending on the county in which the candidate is running in. Clarification is needed now.

We are called to the Legislature to represent constituents from all communities in Ohio. Ohioans from all walks of life deserve, at the very least, an opportunity to approach the decision to run for office without the ambiguity of these vague requirements. When candidates are required to use a name on their petition that they no longer use in daily life, it can be dangerous and painful. If candidates have gone through the effort to legally change their name in a court of law in our state, why must we deny them the ability to run for office using that same name?

Lastly, I would respectfully urge that Chair Peterson hold another hearing for proponent testimony so that the individual's who would be most personally affected by House Bill 467 have the opportunity to come and speak on their own behalf about their stories.

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Chairman Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey and my fellow members of the Government Oversight committee, thank you again for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 467. Representative Brown Piccolantonio and I are happy to take any questions you may have at this time.