

#### **4<sup>th</sup> House District**

Parts of NE Franklin County  
Including Gahanna, New Albany,  
Westerville, Columbus, Jefferson,  
Plain, and other area Townships



#### **Committees**

Commerce & Labor  
Pensions (Ranking Member)  
Primary & Secondary Education  
Technology & Innovation

### **Representative Beryl Brown Piccolantonio 4<sup>th</sup> House District**

Testimony to the House Government Oversight Committee  
House Bill 467  
April 9, 2024

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for inviting Representative Grim and me to provide sponsor testimony for House Bill 476.

HB 476 would amend the requirement that candidates for public office must disclose all names used in the past five years on their Declaration of Candidacy portion of their nominating petition.

All of us here in the legislature have filled out a Declaration of Candidacy on a Nominating Petition before. Many of us – myself included – have changed our names when we married. Some of us ran for office within five years of that name change and never realized that we were qualifying for an exemption to the Ohio Revised Code that would have otherwise required us to list our past name.

This issue was recently brought to light when several candidates for the Ohio legislature were questioned about whether they had disclosed prior names on their nominating petition. The news coverage made clear that this requirement is not well known or enforced. In fact, there is no mention of this requirement in the Ohio Candidate Requirement Guide published by the Ohio Secretary of State and there is no place on the nominating petition form to list any prior name(s). The Boards of Election handling the challenges brought in 2024 handled the challenges in different ways resulting in some candidates being permitted to stay on the ballot and some candidates not being certified to be on the ballot.

This bill proposes a modest change that would add an exemption from disclosure if the change of name was granted by any court in the state of Ohio. The process for a legal name change in Ohio requires an individual to go through a court process that involves a public hearing, disclosure of criminal history, publication in a newspaper in general circulation, and an adjudication by the court, among other requirements.

This bill would also add space to the Declaration of Candidacy form so that candidates who are required to provide previous names used in the last five years for any reason will have space to do so. Finally, it will require the office of the Secretary of State to include this requirement in the Ohio Requirement Candidate Guide so candidates are aware of the requirement.

I have had conversations with interested parties including those impacted by this year's decision and several election officials and believe this approach will bring uniformity,

certainty, address safety concerns for potential candidates, and will not have any negative unintended consequences.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important piece of legislation. I will now turn it over to Representative Grim. After she testifies, we would be happy to answer any questions the committee members may have.