



Testimony of Catherine Gunsalus, Director of State Advocacy
Heritage Action for America
December 12, 2023

Proponent Testimony: SB 137

Submitted to the Ohio Senate General Government Committee

Thank you, Chairman Rulli, and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 137. My name is Catherine Gunsalus, Director of State Advocacy for Heritage Action for America. We are a grassroots organization with two million grassroots activists across the country, including thousands of Ohioans.

By prohibiting Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV), SB 137 implements important protections that would ensure Ohio maintains three important principles in our elections:

1. It should be easy to vote and hard to cheat.
2. Every Ohioan should have confidence in the security and integrity of their election system.
3. Voters should be able to cast their vote for the one candidate they want to represent them in a particular office. One person, one vote.

A recent report from The Heritage Foundation highlights the many issues with Ranked-Choice Voting:¹

- **RCV is prone to errors.** Alameda County, California officials admitted two months after a 2022 school board election that they had incorrectly tabulated the RCV votes and had certified the wrong person as the winner. No election official noticed the mistake because of the overly complicated process of RCV vote counting until an outside advocacy group flagged the issue.
- **RCV disenfranchises voters.** Nearly one in three voters do not rank multiple candidates in RCV elections. Thus, if a voter does not rank all the candidates in a race, that voter's ballot may be thrown out in subsequent rounds of vote tabulation. In the 2021 New York mayor's race, by the eighth round, the ballots of more than 140,000 voters had been thrown out because they did not completely rank all candidate choices. These voters were effectively disenfranchised due to "ballot exhaustion."
- **RCV undermines the democratic process.** The ultimate winner in RCV is often not the choice of a majority of voters who participated in the election and thus, does not have a genuine mandate from a majority of voters.

¹ <https://www.heritage.org/election-integrity/report/ranked-choice-voting-should-be-ranked-dead-last-election-reform>

Our nation was built on the consent of the governed. When citizens believe that elections produce clear results between known opposing ideas, they learn to live with results even if they do not like the outcome.

RCV is about political power, not about what is best for Ohio. SB 137 protects Ohioans from confusion, chaos and disenfranchisement.

We urge the committee to vote YES on SB 137.

Thank you.