

Written Testimony submitted to the Ohio State Legislature

Senate General Government Committee

Senate Bill 137

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate Bill 137, addressing a prohibition on what is commonly referred to as “Ranked Choice Voting” or “RCV.” My name is Lori Roman. I am the Chairman and CEO of the American Constitutional Rights Union and American Constitutional Rights Union Action Fund. This testimony is presented on behalf of the Action Fund and in support of Senate Bill 137.

The American Constitutional Rights Union (www.theacru.org), formerly the American Civil Rights Union, was established in 1999 by close advisors to President Ronald Reagan--Robert Carleson and Attorney General Edwin Meese III--to stand against harmful, anti-constitutional ideologies that have taken hold in our nation’s courts, schools, and bureaucracies. Since 2013, the organization has worked diligently to protect the integrity of elections. Attorney General Meese still serves on our Board of Directors and offers important leadership and guidance to our work.

ACRU and ACRU Action Fund are the nation’s leaders in protecting vulnerable voters. In January 2020, we launched our Protect Vulnerable Voters Project, and this led to our groundbreaking Center for Vulnerable Voters (www.centerforvulnerablevoters.org). We work to protect the voting rights of Americans, with particular attention paid to the elderly, disabled, those in residential facilities, and military voters. We were the first organization to ever take on this issue to ensure their votes are not suppressed or stolen.

Below is a link to an op ed by ACRU Board Members Ed Meese and former Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell, which serves as an excellent summary of this important project:
<https://townhall.com/columnists/edwinmeeseiii/2022/08/02/the-most-despicable-form-of-vote-fraud-n2611123>

Vulnerable Voters already struggle to exercise their voting rights. They are susceptible to vote fraud, vote suppression, and barriers to voting. Even for those vulnerable voters who are not in residential facilities, Ranked Choice Voting (also called “Instant-Runoff Voting (IRV)”) is complicated, confusing, and challenging. It will further disenfranchise these voters and will increase the likelihood that they will not vote or will seek assistance from someone who may ignore their free choice and fill out the ballot for them.

Activists pushing Ranked Choice Voting say that it is simple.

It is not simple. It is complicated and confusing. It disenfranchises voters and makes vulnerable voters more susceptible to vote fraud and suppression.

The elderly residents we speak with on a regular basis are deeply disturbed by what they perceive as a confusing and complicated change in the election process. One elderly nursing home resident we spoke with stated:

“I understand that technology will move forward at a pace I can’t understand or catch up with. That’s fine. But I always thought participating in civil discourse and the political process was something that would remain evergreen. This new voting process is deeply confusing and feels like something designed to keep me from participating in something in, which I’ve taken great pride – our election process. I’ve seen the instructions. I’ve listened to people describe how to work this new ballot. I’m just not interested. It’s not meant for me. It’s meant to keep my thoughts and opinions and values from being a part of the system.”

When speaking with both homeless and disabled voting constituencies and their advocates we’ve received similar feedback. RCV is too complicated to empower them to vote without direct assistance, especially those in group homes. And direct assistance makes them vulnerable to vote fraud.

We’ve heard:

“There’s ‘no way’ the voter can know enough about each candidate to properly rank them. This will make it even harder to vote.”

Activists push Ranked Choice Voting by promoting it in and for the military.

The Left recognizes that Americans love and support the military, so they use the military to advance their RCV propaganda. Everyone knows there are challenges in military voting, so the Left presents RCV as the solution. But RCV will only make it more difficult and more complicated for military voters. ACRU advocates for military voters and there is more information at www.protectmilitaryvotes.org.

Military voters are already disenfranchised to a great degree, but RCV will make it much worse.

Only 26% of military members voted in 2018.

One Service Member said:

“I’m proud to cast my ballot and participate in the system—but really my job is to protect the system. This new configuration makes the process even more complicated than before. I already knew my vote was likely not going to be counted, but now I feel like I’m participating in a mock election. It doesn’t make sense.”

ACRU’s Center for Vulnerable Voters focuses on:

- Enabling vulnerable voting constituencies to protect their vote and exercise their rights.
- Ensuring election officials, poll watchers and poll workers understand how to protect the integrity of all votes.
- Training and educating residential facility staff in how to protect voting rights.
- Educating citizens to actively participate in protecting their loved ones and fellow citizens.
- Educating and engaging policy makers and officials in ensuring election integrity for vulnerable voters.

We are the nation’s leading expert on protecting the voting rights of vulnerable citizens and fully support Senate Bill 137 to prohibit ranked choice voting and protect the voting rights of your most vulnerable citizens.

For follow up questions and more information, I may be reached at lori.roman@theacru.org.

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