

February 19, 2024

Carl Henderson

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Dear Chairman Rulli, Ranking Member DeMora, Ranking Member Gavarone, and members of the General Government Committee, thank you for your time and the opportunity to submit my testimony on Senate Bill (SB) 137.

My name is Carl Henderson, I am a resident in the city of Huber Heights. I am a program manager at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and I am writing to oppose the passage of SB 137. Since I was a kid, I have grown up around politics as I attended political events and fundraisers with my father as he ran for judge in the city of Dayton, as well as supporting other candidates running for office. Even though my father was successful in his campaign to be judge, I unfortunately saw many of the negative effects of one-party rule. Several candidates who had the experience, passion, and support from their community; were not successful because they did not get the endorsement from the political party due to they were not considered “favorites” by those in control of the party and/or top financial donors. This current system is resulting in Ohioans losing faith in democracy because it limits their choices to who can best lead their communities.

Ranked choice voting (RCV) would open the door for candidates across different political spectrums to compete and gives voters more options to select a candidate reflective of their value system and beliefs. RCV also means candidates would win support from the majority, which in turn allows for the electorate to accurately represented based upon the key issues in their respective community and/or communities. It is important to note that between 1913 and 1960, five Ohio cities (Cleveland, Ashtabula, Toledo, Hamilton, and Cincinnati) used RCV and this in turn led to more accurate representation of the electorate as well as a greater diversity of ideologies. Furthermore, the bill’s sponsor acknowledged that the Ohio Supreme Court ruled in 1923 that Ohio municipalities and charter counties have a right to use RCV.

SB 137 if passed threatens Home Rule Authority granted by the Ohio Constitution, which in turn goes against our Founding Fathers’ intention to create a system of governance by consensus based upon the key issues, ideas, and values of the community. By voting against this bill, we uphold the ideals held by our Founding Fathers’, while ensuring current and future generations feel included and heard in our democratic process.

Sincerely,

Carl Henderson