

February 16, 2024  
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Dear Chairman Rulli, Ranking Member DeMora and members of the General Government Committee,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit testimony today on SB 137. My name is Chris Anderson, I am a lifelong resident of Ohio and a Columbus resident for more than 40 years. I am here today to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 137.

I have been studying the topic of Rank Choice Voting (or... RCV as it is known) over the last several months and have devoted quite a bit of thought to it. SB 137 proposes to prohibit Rank Choice Voting (or RCV) in Ohio by financially penalizing Ohio counties and municipalities that implement it. I believe there are two critical problems with this bill.

The first is that it implicitly assumes that the RCV election system has significant downsides that make it less desirable than our current "single choice plurality wins" system. Not only do I believe that that assumption is false, I believe that RCV is clearly a **better** way to conduct elections and would yield benefits for Ohioans including:

1. Encouraging a greater diversity of candidates to run
2. Encouraging candidates to listen to all of their prospective constituents and seek policies that achieve the greatest good, rather than the wishes of an entrenched party base
3. Providing a better reflection of the true will of the voters
4. Effectively eliminating the "spoiler" effect of 3<sup>rd</sup> party candidates. It gives voters the freedom to vote for their true first choice without fear that their vote will help the candidate they like the least.

The second problem is that SB 137 proposes to achieve the ban by violating counties' and municipalities' right to Home Rule. The implication being that our elected officials at the State level know how to govern Ohio counties and municipalities better than our locally-elected officials. I am aware of no compelling evidence to support that implication and further am alarmed at the precedent it would be setting. For over 100 years, Ohio has allowed its municipalities to make their own decisions through Home Rule. Any violation of this principle must be carefully considered and implemented only when there is a clear, compelling, necessary reason to do so, which I believe is not the case with SB 137.

I ask you to consider my testimony and the two reasons I have described and to vote NO on SB 137.

Sincerely,

Chris Anderson