

Testimony on Senate Bill 137

Senate General Government Committee

February 19, 2024

Submitted by:

Deborah L. Hogshead

Chair Rulli, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member DeMora, and members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to present this testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 137. My name is Deborah L. Hogshead. I am an Ohio resident.

I oppose SB 137 and encourage you to do the same.

I oppose SB 137 because it represents an assault on democracy and local control.

The elected representatives closest to the people are those at the municipal and county levels. The people who elect these representatives should have the option of using ranked choice voting if a local resolution or ordinance is passed for that purpose. The State of Ohio gives municipalities the right to home rule, and in 1923, the Ohio Supreme Court confirmed that Ohio municipalities and counties have a right to use ranked choice voting. SB 137 would chop away at the principle of home rule, it would take away the right to use ranked choice voting, and it would punish—by withholding funding—any locality that approved this voting system.

Democracy should be promoted, not stifled and punished.

SB 137 serves no purpose but to give state legislators control over municipal and county affairs that should be decided by local voters. As North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum, a Republican, has said, “If we truly believe in limited government and local control, we can begin by honoring the boundaries, intent and spirit of home rule charters, especially when there is no evidence of any harm having occurred from trusting the residents of cities to have self-determination within the bounds of their home rule charters.”

I urge you to oppose SB 137.

Thank you.

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