

21 February 2024

Denise Riley  
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**WRITTEN OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF Denise Riley**  
*Constituent of Ohio Senate District 30*

Chairman Rulli, Ranking Member DeMora and members of the General Government Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB137. I'm Denise Riley, a concerned citizen, a poll worker, and a Republican volunteering with Rank The Vote Ohio since 2020. I strongly oppose Senate Bill 137, which aims to ban ranked choice voting in Ohio and financially penalize municipalities that adopt it. I believe SB137 infringes on Ohio's home rule principles, which empower local governments to manage their own affairs and foster autonomy and civic participation. However, SB137 violates this principle by restricting the electoral choices of local communities, who may prefer ranked choice voting over the current system.

Ranked choice voting has gained popularity in various municipalities across the country as a means to give voters more choice, encourage positive campaigning, and ensure that elected officials have the support of the majority of the people they serve instead of only representing the limited few. My family across Ohio, from the Village of Beallsville to here in Columbus and the charter city of North Olmstead, are fully behind ranked choice voting. As a Republican, I firmly believe in the principles of limited government and local control, and I think SB137 contradicts these principles by imposing a statewide ban on a specific electoral method. Setting this precedent by undermining home rule could have far-reaching implications for the relationship between the state and local governments. It may lead to a slippery slope where the state increasingly encroaches on matters that have traditionally been within the purview of local governments.

I believe that, as a former board member and president of Switzerland Of Ohio Local School District in Monroe County, the elections I participated in would have been more free and fair with a ranked ballot. When 7 candidates run for 3 seats, many voters

strategically refrain from voting for all three spots because they don't want to hurt their first choice. Ranked Choice Voting would have allowed voters to rank all the candidates honestly, and could have resulted in more representative outcomes.

I respectfully urge you to reconsider SB137 and to respect the principles of home rule, the ability of municipalities to govern themselves, and the need to avoid setting a harmful precedent for the future. Thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns.

Sincerely,

Denise Riley