

February 19, 2024
Lisa Pultz

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

Hello and thank you for the opportunity to submit my testimony. My name is Lisa Pultz, and I was born and raised in central Ohio. I work in anti-money laundering and am looking to volunteer more in my community. I am here to testify in opposition to SB 137, a bill that would ban ranked choice voting in Ohio.

I am in favor of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) because I am pro-majority rule. RCV ensures majority rule by eliminating candidates until one has more than 50% of the votes, determined by voter preference. Our current system allows for a candidate with a minority of votes to win elections and impose their will against the wishes of the majority who did not vote for them. It is no wonder then that voters across Ohio and the nation at large are losing confidence in our electoral system. I find myself among them. Voters often feel at the polls that they must choose between the lesser of two evils. RCV allows more freedom for voters, as they can cast their ballots for their true favored candidate without fear that their vote will be wasted or that the candidate they like the least will be helped.

RCV has been put into practice in multiple jurisdictions internationally and within the US with great success. Australia has used RCV for over one hundred years and use of RCV in Minneapolis increased voter turnout by about 10% after it was introduced in 2009. Voters overwhelmingly reported a positive experience with RCV. RCV encourages voter participation and voter confidence. These are the hallmarks of a healthy electoral system.

One objection to RCV is that it is too confusing and unnecessarily complicates elections. I disagree and I believe this objection is unfair to Ohioans. RCV is easily understood by voters in Australia, Minneapolis, St. Paul, San Francisco, Sante Fe, and other places, so why would Ohioans be unable to understand it?

SB 137 would not only continue the same system that is causing voters to feel hopeless and disaffected without fixing anything but would go a step further. This bill would go so far as to punish voters' right to self-governance and home rule by withholding funds from any locality which chooses to implement RCV. Voters wish to have a say in how they choose their leaders and this bill would respond with punishment. Is this a good system of governance? This is why voters are losing faith in politics.

I wish to conclude by reiterating my opposition to this bill. RCV has been proven to be a success and is a cornerstone of good governance. I want a strong system of governance that is based on majority rule. I want high voter turnout. I want free and fair elections. I don't have confidence in the current system. We know we can do better, so why don't we?

Thank you,

Lisa Pultz