

House Ways and Means Committee – December 1, 2020

Testimony – Substitute for HB 5032 H-3

Representative Ann Bollin, District 42

House Bill 5032 would increase the precinct size to 5000 registered voters, allow for the consolidation of precincts in any election other than a November General Election, and require local clerks to maintain a permanent absentee voter application list.

Increasing precinct sizes and allowing for the consolidation of precinct locations in non-general election years will free up election workers, voting machines, and other supplies and materials. Clerks will have greater flexibility to allocate resources to meet their unique demands and allow for the greater utilization of absentee counting boards, which in my opinion, lead to greater integrity in the administration of elections.

HB 5032 is a practical response to the increasing number of voters choosing to vote by absentee ballot since No-reason AV was passed in 2018 and the restrictions placed on local clerks to find alternative polling locations that meet the law.

I would also note that Section 168.660 and 168.661 of Michigan’s election law outline the timeframes which must be followed for the alteration or rearrangement of precincts.

HB 5032 also requires local clerks to maintain a permanent absentee voter application list. This will assist with voter confidence since the passage of Proposal 3 and No Reason AV. This will provide voters with continuity across the state. Currently maintaining a permanent absent voter application list is optional.

This bill has the support of the Council of Election Officials and the SOS testified as neutral at the Elections Committee hearing.

As a former clerk, I encourage the passage of these bills and believe they will add to the integrity and efficiency of election administration at the local level.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the committee and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.