

**House Committee on Ways and Means Meeting Wednesday, December 4, 10:30 A.M.**

Good morning Chairman Iden, Vice-Chairs and fellow Representatives,

My name is Ann Bollin. I serve as the Representative for Michigan's 42<sup>nd</sup> district and prior to becoming State Representative, I served as the Clerk for the Charter Township of Brighton for 16 years. I am here to speak on HB's 5031 and 5032. These bills, if passed into law, will assist local clerks in their statutory duty of administering elections.

HB 5031 would expand the definition of polling locations to include certain privately-owned venues. Schools and churches are increasingly reluctant to open their doors to the public on election day. This bill addresses this problem by allowing certain privately-owned buildings to be used as polling locations, so long as the building owner isn't a sponsor of a political or independent committee.

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 provided the consolidation is in the same polling location, and require local clerks to maintain a permanent absentee voter application list.

Increasing precinct sizes and allowing for the consolidation of precinct locations in a general November election will free up election workers, voting machines, and other supplies and materials. It will also help local clerks with the challenge of limited available polling locations. 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, leads to greater integrity in the administration of elections.

With the passage of Proposal 3, it is expected that the number of absent voters will increase thus reducing the number of walk-in precinct voters.

The 5000 number was selected because it is consistent with current election law that allows for precinct consolidation when a federal candidate is not on the ballot. The bill also calls for the number of registered voters, not active voters, to be included in that number. As a former clerk on the front lines, I fully understand what goes into determining whether or not to consolidate precincts. Consideration is given to whether you can accommodate more voters, the equipment set-up, access to electricity, length of lines, available workers, etc. Clerks have a clear vision of what that looks like and how to make it work.

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 and

do not allow for these changes within approximately 180 to 210 days prior to the primary next preceding the general November election.

Furthermore, 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 and provide voters with consistency across the state should they move or relocate. Implementing this in 2020 will give us a baseline, or foundation, for moving forward with further changes and future planning to ensure our elections are run fairly, freely and securely.

These bills were drafted in concert with a work group I initiated comprised of local clerks, county clerks and other election officials and have been legislative priorities for the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks and the Council of Election Officials for the last several years. I have had numerous exchanges with stakeholders, clerks and voters and have made revisions to address their concerns.

I believe it is important to keep things moving and advance these measures for use in 2020. As a former clerk, I encourage the passage of these bills out of committee and am confident they will add to the integrity and efficiency of election administration at the all levels.

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