



February 28, 2022

The Honorable Matt Huffman  
Statehouse  
Columbus, OH 43215  
VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Dear President Huffman:

We want to thank you for the continued dialogue regarding the 2022 primary election and your thoughtful approach to considering the options before the legislature. As indicated in our last correspondence, we wish to continue to share our perspective with you and your members as you work through these options.

OAEO is in receipt of the letter dated February 22<sup>nd</sup> from Secretary LaRose to your office as well as the accompanying letter from Attorney General Yost. The letters point out concerns that are being vigorously discussed by local election officials. We urge you to give due consideration to the issues they raise.

There is a saying among election officials that "It takes three things to run a successful election: time, money and people. You can always get more money and more people, but you can't get more time." This saying looms large for Ohio's 88 boards of elections right now. Although we would be grateful to have additional money to hire more people to complete the myriad tasks before us, what we really need is more time. And only you, as legislators, can help us with that.

We just received state legislative maps on Saturday and still do not have the legal descriptions, which are necessary for boards of elections to begin implementing the new districts. (District maps closely approximate the actual districts, but they do not correspond exactly to the legal descriptions.) Moreover, these maps are subject to further proceedings in the Ohio Supreme Court, the result of which likely will not be known until next week. Congressional maps are still being debated by the Commission and must be completed before election officials can begin our internal process of redrawing district lines and assigning voters to those districts. Given these facts, our ability to administer a fair and accurate election has been compromised. Critical functions such as ballot proofing and testing of equipment will necessarily be delayed and then rushed. The result will likely be mistakes in the election. This is not how we want to do business, but it is the only option currently left open to us. This confluence of circumstances causes grave concerns on the part of election officials. As the ultimate arbiter of the time, manner and place of elections in Ohio, the General Assembly should be concerned as well.

Many counties around the state no longer have the ability to run a successful May 3<sup>rd</sup> election, and more counties lose that ability each day that we do not have final maps and the legal descriptions we need to implement them. Although HB 93 gave the Secretary of State needed flexibility to move state election deadlines, no one in Ohio can change the federal deadline to mail ballots to our military and overseas voters on March 18<sup>th</sup>. We are aware that the Secretary of State has requested a waiver of this deadline,

but as election officials we cannot count on that occurring as we do our internal planning. Missing this deadline will inevitably lead to litigation and additional confusion for voters, election boards, and the candidates seeking office this spring.

Rather than face this seeming inevitability, we ask you to consider delaying the May 3<sup>rd</sup> primary for all contests. Please rest assured that we do not ask this lightly. Our strong preference has always been to hold the election on the day it was originally scheduled. However, we feel obligated to share our concerns about the consequences of maintaining our current course.

Again, we greatly appreciate the ability to share our thoughts with you. As Ohio's election professionals, we are happy to provide any additional information you or your colleagues may require.

Sincerely and respectfully,

*Brian Sleeth*

Brian Sleeth, President  
Ohio Association of Election Officials

*Sherry Poland*

Sherry Poland, First Vice-President  
Ohio Association of Election Officials

CC: Speaker Bob Cupp  
Minority Leader Allison Russo  
Minority Leader Kenny Yuko  
Secretary of State Frank LaRose