

Ways and Means Committee - December 1, 2020

Testimony - House Bill 5123 H-3

Representative Ann Bollin, District 42

Good afternoon Chair Iden, Vice Chair and fellow representatives. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you on HB 5123 H-3 and its substitute H-4. The bill requires local units **with more than two precincts and less than 6,000 registered voters** to establish Absent Voter Counting Boards. H-4 is a conflict sub due to PA 177 of 2020 adopted recently that allows joint counting boards.

In Michigan, there are two different methods of counting absent voter ballots. In the precinct or by an absent voter counting board.

The changes will allow for smaller units of government to continue the practice of processing AV ballots in the precinct but will also assist communities with a higher number of registered voters with their AV processing. We witnessed an increase in absent voters or vote by mail across Michigan this year. We need to ensure we are running fair and free elections and by adding continuity across the state we can move towards a more uniform and accountable way of processing absent voter ballots including the integrity and security of the AV ballot process.

The bill was supported by Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks and the SOS in committee.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.