



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF BRIGHTON

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Honorable Members of the Committee on Elections and Ethics:

My name is Ann Bollin and I am clerk for the Charter Township of Brighton located in Livingston County. I have over 15,000 registered voters within four school districts. I have been clerk since 2003 and have witnessed numerous changes to MI election law.

I am writing in support of HB's 4814, 4815 and 5242 moving millage election questions to a general election ballot. I am sorry I am unable to testify in person due to a scheduling conflict.

I support these bills for the following reasons:

Increased transparency – we should be striving for more voter turnout, not less. As a local clerk, I am disappointed at times at the low voter turnout for some of the most critical issues. These issues are generally the ones that will have the greatest impact and we should be striving to ensure we have the highest level of voter participation as possible. Cycling dollar and cent questions to a regular election ballot would provide voters with more predictability on when these ballot measures are being presented and provide a greater opportunity to weigh in on the issues that will affect them the most.

Adds to Election Integrity – Michigan has sound election law with checks and balances yet voters don't think their vote counts. I often hear voters say "but I didn't even know there was an election then". Because voters tend to pay more attention around November I believe that putting dollar and cent questions on a regular election cycle ballot, the voters will be provided a greater opportunity to weigh in on the issues affecting them the most. As a result, they will have a greater sense that their vote counted and their voice matters.

Reliability – Our goal is to run fair, transparent elections with the highest level of integrity. By establishing a set practice of when we take millage questions to our voters I think we will see that we have greater voter turnout. At a recent meeting with other election officials it was noted that there is no real pattern that would indicate whether a millage question passes or fails based on the date of the election and that most pass. Having a standard election date for said questions would also help enable local governments to budget resources and assist with their cash flow forecasting and budget planning.

Continuity – With each new piece of election related legislation, it seems that we create an additional circumstance or special rule that must be followed. With over 1,000 local clerks administering elections and 7 million voters in this great State, we need to move towards more uniformity and continuity. Sometimes there are residual consequences as a result that lead to conflict with other rules already in place resulting in confusion and mistakes which chip away at the public's perception that their vote counts. We need to recognize this and address them to further our efforts to run elections with integrity and ensure every vote counts.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ann M. Bollin, CMC, CMMC
Clerk, Charter Township of Brighton