

OAEO Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes
January 12, 2024

The Legislative Committee of the Ohio Association of Election Officials (OAEO) met on January 12, 2024, during the 2024 Winter OAEO conference. Co-Chair Jeff Rezebek called the meeting to order at 8:15 a.m. Mr. Rezebek congratulated LaVera Scott, the new Second Vice-President of the association. After a round of applause, he added that Ross McDonald was the new Legislative Committee Co-Chair. He also noted the intention to hold meetings on a quarterly basis.

Association president Paul Adams addressed the committee, thanking the committee for serving.

Present were Isaac Arthur, Damien Bawn, Cecilia Blevins, Laura Bruns, Chelsea Cline, Randi Clites, Eric Corbin, Diana Dulebohn, Leslie Evans, Gail Garbrandt, Marlee Gibson, Beth Goldenfield, Jane Hanley, Charlie Hardman, Karla Herron, Regine Johnson, Joyce Kale-Pesta, Dee Keister-Smith, Ben Kline, David Koehl, Mollie Landefeld, Michelle Larrick, Ross McDonald, Nicole Mickley, Carla Patton, Stephanie Penrose, Tony Perlotti, Jeff Rezebek, Brett Riffle, Kirsten Ross, LaVera Scott, Jamie Snider, Nicole Unzicker, and Jane Zimmerman.

Absent from the call were Alex Linser, Jeff Matthews, Carol Perry, and Tonya Wichman.

Mr. Rezebek noted that the presentation on ranked choice voting would be held at a later time. The focus would be on the process rather than on policy initially.

Mr. Rezebek then opened discussion on a bill that protects election administrator information. He stated that the bill would allow election officials to “opt-in” to have their personal information redacted from public websites, in a similar way to the process allowed for law enforcement officers. Ms. Scott stated that the bill had been updated to include only regular, permanent employees of the board office, not election day workers. She noted that the counties’ systems are already set up to deal with confidential voters. Mr. McDonald asked how many on the committee would be interested in signing up for the program, and several indicated they would be interested. Ms. Scott noted that the threat was real and election officials should be able to choose to participate, and that she met many people who left the profession due to threats.

Mr. Rezebek stated that last year there was an attempt to do an “election bill clean up” to remove old language and make the language clear. President Adams has requested that the committee take up this project again, and asked if members would forward any language and issues they find when reading revised code.

Mr. Rezebek noted that there were two bills related to voters’ party affiliation, requiring voters to register with a party prior to voting in a partisan primary election. Ms. Kale-Pesta asked what was behind the two-party affiliation bills, and Mr. Rezebek noted that his county gets lots of questions on switching party affiliation. Ms. Kale-Pesta noted that it would be helpful when

ordering ballots for a primary. Another member noted she was not in favor of the change, but stressed that if it were to pass, she would expect that all voters be notified as they would be upset. Mr. Rezebek agreed that education would be important. Mr. McDonald noted that there may be issues with minor parties. Aaron Ockerman noted that Ms. Scott brought up a good point during an earlier conversation related to the frequency at which a voter can change their party affiliation. Ms. Kale-Pesta noted that if you miss the deadline, you could not declare your party affiliation at the polls and receive a party ballot.

Ms. Scott stated her belief that Mr. McDonald would be great as legislative co-chair and has her full support. Mr. McDonald stated he was honored to be named as co-chair and encouraged members to contact him. Mr. Rezebek introduced Terry Burton, the new First Vice-President of the Association, and stated that he wanted this to be a good working group.

Mr. Ockerman stated that the legislative committee is an amazing group with lots of election experience. He added that there would likely be lots of activity later in the year as well as 2025, providing many opportunities for the association.

Ms. Hanley moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 a.m. and Carla Patton seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Bruns
Secretary

Approved on