

Thank you Madame Chair,

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the committee today on this very important matter.

I want remind the committee first of some of the testimony of Representative Lund on November 18. Mr. Lund stated that one of, if not the most important reason for wanting to change the way Michigan allocates its electoral votes is because, by his reckoning, Michigan has become “flyover country,” in Presidential elections. Let’s be honest. Changing Michigan’s allocation of electoral votes is nothing more than a way to try to give as many electoral votes to the Republican candidate as possible because Republicans have not carried Michigan in a Presidential election since 1988. Now that they have gerrymandered the Congressional districts, they want to take their rigging of Michigan’s elections to the next level by changing the allocation of electoral votes.

I would like to make the case that if Mr. Lund’s proposed legislation were to be adopted as written Michigan would be off the electoral map completely, as far as Presidential candidates paying attention to Michigan. Since his bill only allows Michigan’s electoral votes to be divided among the two parties garnering the most votes, Presidential candidates would spend less time, money and effort than they have in the past. Since there is no credible scenario where a party other than Democrats or Republicans would be awarded electoral votes under the Lund scheme, the difference of two electoral votes between the party that gets the most votes and the party that gets fewer votes would draw practically no interest on the part of the Democratic or Republican candidates or their campaigns.

By his own testimony, it appears that the awarding of electoral votes based on a percentage of the popular vote is arbitrary and without any real basis in any documented research. He appears to have pulled his numbers out of a random body cavity. “I started just playing with different numbers, did the math. I just sort of picked 1.5% and it seemed to work out.” to quote Representative Lund’s own words from his testimony on November 18.

Mr. Lund tried to make the point that his bill would get Presidential candidates to Michigan to talk about Michigan issues. By my analysis, this proposed legislation would do nothing of the sort, as was pointed out by Representative Schorr at the last hearing. “Honestly, I think this bill raises the white flag for Republicans. You’re saying, they don’t think they can get all 16, so we’ll get them here for 2 or 3. “

To rely on Mr. Lund’s math that “just seems to work out,” is no way to run an election for the most powerful leader in the free world.

I hope that the members of this committee, Republicans and Democrats, will see this bill for the sham that it is and will move on to more important business, such as dealing with our decrepit voting machines and the lack of accuracy in counting the votes in Michigan.

An organization that I have been working with for many years that has worked on **real problems** related to Michigan’s elections, the Michigan Election Reform Alliance, published a very important report that has received virtually no attention from Michigan’s legislature and I’d like to read a few conclusions from that report, entitled Facing Michigan’s Election Cliff – Addressing the Steep Costs of Failing Vote Tabulators.

“Michigan’s tabulators are inaccurate and far below the federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) standards, prone to malfunction, easily compromised, beyond their recommended service life, and need to be retired as soon as possible.

Hand counts have been shown to be more reliable and hand count audits are an important tool to verify the results produced by electronic tabulators.

Audits are an important tool to verify the results produced by electronic tabulators. MERA recommends that the Legislature establish a Blue Ribbon Commission to 1) hold public hearings and receive testimony, 2) develop a comprehensive plan for a transition to a more transparent, accurate, and verifiable vote counting system, and 3) prepare legislation for implementation.

In the interim, MERA urges implementation of a program of random hand count audits to verify the accuracy of machine-produced results. The costs of doing nothing are high, while the costs of addressing the problem are small in comparison. Investing in a dependable, efficient voting system will result in savings of real dollars enhanced public perception that Michigan's elections are fairly and equitably administered, and certainty that election outcomes are accurate."

Instead of proposing legislation that are basically solutions in search of a problem, let's work together to solve real problems in Michigan's election administration system.