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HB25-1265

1 message

Christine Harris <christine@harris4.com>

Mon, Mar 3, 2025 at 10:37 AM

To: "committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov" <committees.lcs.ga@coleg.gov>

Dear Honorable State Representatives,
Thank you for all the work you are doing to make Colorado a great place to live.
I am writing to you today about HB25-1265. I urge each of you to support this bill.
I have lived in Douglas County since 2003. I appreciate the work that our county commissioners do for our county. Since Douglas County has grown exponentially, it is time to expand the number of county commissioners to adequately represent our needs. This is a common sense bill aimed at addressing our growing counties.
Thank you for supporting this bill!

Sincerely,
Christine Harris
1397 Forest Trails Drive
Castle Pines, CO 80108
720-951-2062

Sent from my iPad

House State, Civic, Military, & Veterans Affairs

03/03/2025 01:30 PM

HB25-1265 Mod County Commissioner Elections

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Anne Luginbill For themselves	<p>Hello, members of the committee. My name is Anne Luginbill, and I am writing in support of HB25-1265, sponsored by Rep. Marshall, because I believe it is time that that Douglas County increases the number of people on the County Board. The County has grown significantly over the last period of time, and to best represent the interests of its residents I believe that the number of commissioners should be increased from 3 to 5. I also believe that county commissioners should be elected by the communities they represent since outside interests do not comprehend the intricacies of local matters, particularly at this point in time. In addition, I think that this bill will strengthen local control of our government as well as ensure accountability of government to those governed. I have always believed in fair and equitable elections, and I continue to believe that this is the best way forward especially now. Thank you, and I hope that you will support this important bill.</p>
Dipesh Bhatia For themselves	<p>Chairperson and Members of the Committee,</p> <p>My name is Dipesh Bhatia, and I am a resident of Douglas county. I am testifying today in strong support of this bill because it addresses a fundamental flaw in our current system—one that limits fair representation and accountability in our local government.</p> <p>Right now, my county operates under a three-commissioner system where two individuals consistently take the majority, leaving the minority without a meaningful voice. This creates an imbalance in decision-making, where large portions of our community feel unheard and unrepresented. Expanding the board to five commissioners with district-based elections would provide a more equitable system, ensuring that all areas of our county have a seat at the table.</p> <p>Additionally, under the current system, commissioners are not required to be true representatives of our county. This bill would require commissioners to reside in their respective districts, reinforcing the principle that local leaders should be deeply connected to the communities they serve. When commissioners live outside the county or in areas disconnected from the needs of residents, they cannot effectively advocate for us.</p>

	<p>I urge you to support this bill to ensure a fairer, more representative local government that truly serves **all** residents. Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely, Dipesh Bhatia Douglas County</p>
<p>Linda Templin Amend Ranked Choice Voting for Colorado</p>	<p>My name is Linda Templin. I am the Executive Director for RCV for Colorado</p> <p>RCV for Colorado supports this small expansion of county representation. Some commissioners for larger counties represent more constituents than two state Senators. The work they do is important to maintaining local infrastructure; when there are too few commissioners they are over-burdened by working 7-day weeks.</p> <p>RCV for Colorado also supports this bill because it gives local option to use proportional representation. It gives the option for proportional Ranked Choice Voting (also known as Single Transferable Vote). Voters prefer ranked ballots to pick-one ballots because they are freed of worries of vote-splitting between similar candidates. The majority of user-interface studies show that voters of all demographic groups handle ranked ballots as well or better than pick-one ballots.</p> <p>Proportional representation gives different viewpoints their fair share of the say. Simply put if a third of the constituents have a viewpoint, that viewpoint should have about a third of the seats on the county commission. It eliminates concerns of gerrymandering and relieves counties of redistricting headaches.</p> <p>In the interest of simplicity, RCV for Colorado suggests a friendly amendment that a second method of proportional representation be available in the local option. Open List Proportional Representation (OLPR) uses a pick-one ballot and is tallied similarly to the presidential primaries. Some communities are not yet comfortable with ranked ballots. Some County Clerks would prefer to see other counties first run and audit Single Transferable Vote (STV) before they use that ballot and tally method.</p> <p>RCV for Colorado does not support additional multiple-winner voting and tally methods because creating additional administrative rules is burdensome on state and local elections administrators. STV has passed legal scrutiny in every instance since it was first used in the USA in 1915. While there are other alternative voting methods, they have not passed legal scrutiny and they are not likely to do so.</p>

<p>Sophia Mayott-Guerrero</p> <p>For</p> <p>American Civil Rights Organization</p>	<p>Support HB25-1265 for Modification of County Commissioner Elections</p> <p>I am Sophia Mayott-Guerrero, the Director of Advocacy and Strategic Alliances with the ACLU of Colorado, here in support of HB25-1265, modification of county commissioner elections.</p> <p>The ACLU has a long-standing history of protecting access to voting rights and ensuring democracy sustains. Part of this effort requires equitable and appropriate representation within government on all levels. HB25-1265 ensures equitable representation at the county level, reflecting Colorado's diverse populations, especially in counties with both urban and rural areas. This bill promotes democratic values by addressing discriminatory election practices, such as at-large elections, and upholding the "one-person, one-vote" principle.</p> <p>Proper representation prevents scenarios like a whole representative body being made up entirely of members from one small neighborhood.</p> <p>HB25-1265 aligns local and state elections, reinforcing Colorado's leadership in voting rights. We acknowledge concerns over administrative burden, but these do not outweigh the duty government has to the people's rights. Implementation features of HB25-1265 take these challenges into account, ensuring efficiency while maintaining fair representation. Colorado's leadership in voting rights is crucial. As we navigate evolving challenges, ensuring fair representation is vital for democracy.</p> <p>The ACLU of Colorado urges a YES vote on HB25-1265 to uphold fair representation, equal access, and strengthen democracy.</p>
<p>Christine Harris</p> <p>For</p> <p>themselves</p>	<p>Dear Honorable State Representatives,</p> <p>Thank you for all the work you are doing to make Colorado a great place to live.</p> <p>I am writing to you today about HB25-1265. I urge each of you to support this bill.</p> <p>I have lived in Douglas County since 2003. I appreciate the work that our county commissioners do for our county. Since Douglas County has grown exponentially, it is time to expand the number of county commissioners to adequately represent our needs. This is a common sense bill aimed at addressing our growing counties and providing appropriate representation for our citizens.</p> <p>Thank you for supporting this bill!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Christine Harris</p>

	1397 Forest Trails Drive Castle Pines, CO 80108 720-951-2062
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HB25-1265 Modification of County Commissioner Elections

My name is Aly Belknap, and I am the Executive Director of Colorado Common Cause, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that works for open, honest, and accountable government and fights for the public interest.

Common Cause works on fair representation issues in Colorado and across the country, because we know that no liberty is more fundamental than the right to choose our representatives. We are here today in support of House Bill 1265.

This bill requires that counties with a population of 250,000 or more to have 5 commissioners and 5 districts, elected either by residents in each district, residents in 3 districts and the full county elects 2 at-large, or elected at-large through single transferrable vote proportional ranked choice voting.

District-based election models, or models that incorporate a hybrid of districts and at-large seats, give communities with common interests the opportunity to elect leaders of their choice in ways that at-large only election systems do not.

In 2013, the US Supreme Court handed down a decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* that nullified much of the power of the federal Voting Rights Act. In her dissenting opinion, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg specifically called out at-large elections as a “second-generation barrier” to ballot access for people of color that she stated should be barred by the law. Justice Ginsburg was so emphatic about this because, when looked at broadly across the United States, at-large systems of representation have the effect of systemically diluting the ability for groups who make up the minority of voters in a jurisdiction to elect their candidates of choice.

Counties are large and contain many neighborhoods with different interests: rural areas and metro areas, white majority and POC majority neighborhoods, and so forth. At-large only election systems widely produce winners who reflect the choices of the dominant majority, both due to the dilution effect I’ve discussed, and because it is markedly more difficult to fundraise and win an electoral campaign across an entire county than to win a particular district. District-based elections can create more opportunity for candidates without personal wealth who represent the issues of a specific community to run and win. All in all, incorporating districts into election systems creates more opportunity for local representation.

Under single transferable vote, no one party or voting bloc can take all the seats unless almost all the votes cast are cast for one party's candidates, which is seldom the case. This is another option enabled by state law that counties should have the ability to implement as an alternative means to ensure representation is fair and reflects the diversity of the county as a whole.

Between any and all political contexts, it is better for democracy when voters who share common interests have as much opportunity as possible to elect leaders that reflect those interests.

We hope you will consider a yes vote on this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

4 Technical Amendments to HB25-1265 - Modification of County Commissioner Elections
Submitted by LWVCO Legislative Action Committee on Mar 3, 2025

Technical Amendment #1

In Colorado Revised Statutes, 1-7-1002, amend (1)(b) as follows:

1-7-1002. Ranked voting methods - report - legislative declaration - definitions. (1) As used in this part 10, unless the context otherwise requires:

(b) "Local government" means a ~~statutory~~ COUNTY, city or town or a special district created pursuant to article 1 of title 32.

Technical Amendment #2

In Colorado Revised Statutes, 1-4-601, amend (2)(a); and add (2)(b) and (2)(c) as follows:

1-4-601. Designation of candidates for primary election - definition. (2)(a) An assembly must take no more than two ballots for party candidates for ~~each~~ A SINGLE SEAT FOR AN office to be filled at the next general election. Every candidate receiving thirty percent or more of the votes of all duly accredited assembly delegates who are present and voting on that office must be certified by affidavit of the presiding officer and secretary of the assembly. If no candidate receives thirty percent or more of the votes of all duly accredited assembly delegates who are present and voting, a second ballot must be cast on all the candidates for that office. If on the second ballot no candidate receives thirty percent or more of the votes cast, the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes must be certified as candidates for that office by the assembly. ~~The certificate of designation by assembly must state the name of the office for which each person is a candidate and the candidate's name and address, must designate in not more than three words the name of the political party which the candidate represents, and must certify that the candidate has been a member of the political party for the period of time required by party rule or by subsection (4) of this section if the party has no such rule. The candidate's affiliation, as shown in the statewide voter registration system, is prima facie evidence of political party membership. The certificate of designation must indicate the order of the vote received at the assembly by candidates for each office, but no assembly shall declare that any one candidate has received the nomination of the assembly. The certificate of designation must be filed in accordance with section 1-4-604. If two or more candidates receiving designation under this subsection (2) have received an equal number of votes, the order of certification of designation is determined by lot by the candidates. The assembly shall select a vacancy committee for vacancies in designation or nomination only.~~

(2)(b) FOR PARTY CANDIDATES FOR MULTIPLE SEATS ON A SINGLE BOARD, COUNCIL, COMMISSION OR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL BODY WITH MULTIPLE MEMBERS ELECTED IN THE SAME BALLOT CONTEST, ASSEMBLY DELEGATES MAY VOTE FOR AS MANY SEATS AS ARE TO BE FILLED AT THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION. EVERY CANDIDATE RECEIVING A VOTE ON THIRTY PERCENT OR MORE OF THE BALLOTS OF ALL DULY ACCREDITED ASSEMBLY DELEGATES WHO ARE PRESENT AND VOTING ON THAT OFFICE MUST BE CERTIFIED BY AFFIDAVIT OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER AND SECRETARY OF THE ASSEMBLY. IF FEWER CANDIDATES RECEIVE A VOTE ON THIRTY PERCENT OR MORE OF THE BALLOTS OF ALL DULY ACCREDITED ASSEMBLY DELEGATES WHO ARE PRESENT AND VOTING THAN THE NUMBER SEATS TO FILL AT THE GENERAL ELECTION, THEN THE CANDIDATES RECEIVING THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF VOTES, UNTIL THE NUMBER OF CANDIDATES IS ONE MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF SEATS TO FILL, MUST

BE CERTIFIED AS CANDIDATES FOR THAT OFFICE BY AFFIDAVIT OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER AND SECRETARY OF THE ASSEMBLY.

(2)(c) THE CERTIFICATE OF DESIGNATION BY ASSEMBLY MUST STATE THE NAME OF THE OFFICE FOR WHICH EACH PERSON IS A CANDIDATE AND THE CANDIDATE'S NAME AND ADDRESS, MUST DESIGNATE IN NOT MORE THAN THREE WORDS THE NAME OF THE POLITICAL PARTY WHICH THE CANDIDATE REPRESENTS, AND MUST CERTIFY THAT THE CANDIDATE HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE POLITICAL PARTY FOR THE PERIOD OF TIME REQUIRED BY PARTY RULE OR BY SUBSECTION (4) OF THIS SECTION IF THE PARTY HAS NO SUCH RULE. THE CANDIDATE'S AFFILIATION, AS SHOWN IN THE STATEWIDE VOTER REGISTRATION SYSTEM, IS PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE OF POLITICAL PARTY MEMBERSHIP. THE CERTIFICATE OF DESIGNATION MUST INDICATE THE ORDER OF THE VOTE RECEIVED AT THE ASSEMBLY BY CANDIDATES FOR EACH OFFICE, BUT NO ASSEMBLY SHALL DECLARE THAT ANY ONE CANDIDATE HAS RECEIVED THE NOMINATION OF THE ASSEMBLY. THE CERTIFICATE OF DESIGNATION MUST BE FILED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 1-4-604. IF TWO OR MORE CANDIDATES RECEIVING DESIGNATION UNDER THIS SUBSECTION (2) HAVE RECEIVED AN EQUAL NUMBER OF VOTES, THE ORDER OF CERTIFICATION OF DESIGNATION IS DETERMINED BY LOT BY THE CANDIDATES. THE ASSEMBLY SHALL SELECT A VACANCY COMMITTEE FOR VACANCIES IN DESIGNATION OR NOMINATION ONLY.

Technical Amendment #3

In Colorado Revised Statutes, 1-7-515, amend (4)(b)(II) as follows:

1-7-515. Risk-limiting audits - rules - legislative declaration - definitions. (II) A county shall audit an election using instant voting conducted as part of a coordinated election before December 31, 2023, in accordance with rules adopted by the secretary of state related to ~~ranked choice~~ or instant runoff voting, or, if no such rules are adopted, in accordance with procedures adopted by the county clerk and recorder.

Technical Amendment #4

In HB25-1265 as introduced, replace "ranked choice voting" with "a ranked voting method" or, if preferred and applicable, replace instances of "ranked choice voting" with the specific method type of ranked voting method intended – either multi-winner single transferable vote or single-winner instant-runoff voting.