

Gwendolyn Doak
Wilton

Testimony in support of LD 621: An Act to Increase the Number of Franklin County Commissioners

The Honorable Senator Joseph Baldacci, Representative Ann Matlack, and Members of the State and Local Government Committee,

My name is Gwendolyn Doak, and I am a resident of Wilton in Franklin county writing in support of LD 621, An Act to increase the Number of Franklin County Commissioners, sponsored by Rep. Scott Landry.

Currently Franklin County has only three County Commissioners. Because of this, residents of the county are not well represented (particularly those in more rural areas of Franklin County) and only two votes are required to pass or prevent action on all matters coming before the Commissioners. This is unacceptable when decisions by the Commissioners affect approximately 30,000 residents of our County.

Having such a small threshold for constituting a majority decision has, unfortunately, often resulted in questionable actions on the part of some Commissioners to disregard County Budget Committee oversight of the annual budget and undermine the public process of allocating funds for county-wide services. The most recent example of this was the refusal of two Commissioners to sign checks for payment of designated funds to several non-profits serving our county, organizations providing vital transportation, utilities, nutrition, housing, and workforce development to vulnerable residents.

Further, when a similar proposal to increase the number of Franklin County Commissioners was passed during the last legislative session, a language error allowed the Commissioners to derail the vote by Franklin County residents by refusing to put it on the ballot.

With five Commissioners residents would be more fairly represented, and any decision would require a minimum of three members to approve or reject. This would foster a more thoughtful and balanced decision-making process, as well as ensure proper disbursement of allocated funds.

Thank you very much for your consideration of Representative Landry's proposed legislation, I hope you agree that giving Franklin County voters the opportunity to increase the number of Franklin County Commissioners is the right thing to do.

Gwen Doak, Wilton