

July 15, 2026

Chair Lee,

I want to thank you and the members of this distinguished committee for inviting me to testify today. My name is Lance Reed, and I am the Director of the Summit County Board of Elections in the State of Ohio. As an election official for over 13 years, including nearly 6 years as Director, I have witnessed election observers in the many different roles I have been employed by the Summit County Board of Elections.

I am before you today to emphasize the important role that all observers play, including Congressional Election Observers authorized under the Confirmation of Congressional Observer Access Act of 2024. As an election official, transparency in elections is critical and observers play an important role in that transparency.

While COCOA may have only been signed into law roughly 2 years ago, the Summit County Board of Elections is familiar with the program. Summit County, Ohio is contained within the 13th Congressional District, and a Congressional election observer was appointed by the Chair of the Committee on House Administration for the November 5, 2024 General Election and was in our office the entirety of Election Day.

Our Board had a positive experience with the observer appointed to our office, and while we are unaware of what the observer's opinion was, I hope they had a positive experience as well.

Election officials and the public should embrace all observers for the critical role they play in ensuring those entrusted with the sacred task of election administration and the tabulation of the people's voice are doing it to the letter of the law and maintaining the highest integrity.

With that said, I want to thank this committee once again for inviting me, and to thank all of you for your service. I'm happy to take any questions you may have.