“Ohio’s Democrats have shown that they have little interest in creating a legal or fair map—instead, they have attempted to circumvent the elected representatives of the people of Ohio and give federal judges from outside of Ohio the power over our district lines,” Batchelder said.

COLUMBUS—In an effort to make the 2012 elections process more conducive for boards of elections and candidates alike, the Ohio House of Representatives today concurred on Senate changes to House Bill 318, which moves the presidential and congressional primary election from March to June.

As a result of a recent ruling by the Ohio Supreme Court, the fate of Ohio’s Congressional districts is uncertain. This issue surrounding the primary date arose when Ohio’s Democrats sought to put House Bill 194—which would move the primary date, among other elections changes—up for yet another referendum. Later, in the House, Democrats failed to support legislation that would have made the new Congressional map effective immediately, avoiding legal chaos for 2012.

House Bill 318 will establish two primary elections. First, a primary will be held in March for state legislative candidates, U.S. Senate candidates, and local races. A second primary will then take place in June for the presidential and congressional primary election. It also moves August special elections to June to eliminate the need for local boards of elections to conduct

their own separate elections.

“In addition to ensuring that Ohio is properly following federal law, this bill will save valuable tax dollars for our boards of elections at a time when, for many local governments, every penny counts,” said Speaker of the Ohio House William G. Batchelder (R-Medina). “I’m very pleased to see this bill pass from the House today because it fixes a sizeable issue that developed from Democrat missteps and moves toward a more favorable elections process here in Ohio.”

On September 26th, the governor signed the bipartisan-supported House Bill 319, which provides for the new post-census congressional districts and retains the current ratio of Republicans and Democrats in Ohio’s congressional delegation, equally subjecting each party to the loss of one member. The map also went beyond what was required by the Voting Rights Act by drawing a third-term Democrat incumbent into the same seat as a first-term Republican, as well as creating a heavily Democrat-leaning seat in Franklin County.

However, after House Democrats failed to produce a map for review and after the Democrat map that eventually was created violated the U.S. Constitution and the Voting Rights Act, Ohio Democrats sued the Ohio Supreme Court in an effort to subject the wholly legal House Bill 319 to a referendum. This maneuver puts the new map on hold until after the December 7th filing deadline, which sparks the necessity to promptly amend the primary date for congressional candidates.

“Ohio’s Democrats have shown that they have little interest in creating a legal or fair map—instead, they have attempted to circumvent the elected representatives of the people of Ohio and give federal judges from outside of Ohio the power over our district lines,” Batchelder said. “The House’s concurrence on House Bill 318 has helped to prevent our state from falling prey to subversive political tactics that would hurt our entire state as a whole.”