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Committee on Health

Committee on Energy &  
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**House Joint Resolution 5**

**Sponsor Testimony**

**Government Accountability & Oversight Committee**

**January 8, 2018**

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Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and Members of the Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for allowing me to provide sponsor testimony on HJR 5, which would change the process for initiated Constitutional amendments and statutes.

House Joint Resolution 5 would increase the number of signatures needed for both initiated statute and constitutional amendment by 25% in aggregate for each. It would also increase the vote total needed for passage to 60 percent in the election. Finally, it would ban the paying of petition gatherers.

This year, we dealt with Issue 1 and 2, both conceived and funded by Californians. We need to stop them from coming into Ohio again and spending millions of dollars to try to add ill-conceived measures to the Ohio Constitution and Revised Code. It is time for Ohioans to take our initiative process back and stop well-funded, out-of-state special interests from coming into our state and wreaking havoc. Between the recreational marijuana issue in 2015, this year's Issue 2, or one of the other issues we've faced, we must take steps to remove the 'for sale' sign that is currently on our state's constitution and revised code.

Ohio's initiative process is a progressive era reform, intended to empower the citizenry to go directly to the pass to pass a law or amendment if the General Assembly is derelict in our duty. It was not intended for out of state, well-funded special interests to come into our state and buy their way into the Constitution or Revised Code. Unfortunately, every single initiative in recent memory has been the letter. Our initiative process is broken. It is hurting the citizens of Ohio. It's time to fix this problem before it gets completely out of hand.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Joint Resolution 5. I would be happy to take any questions.