



**State Representatives
Sarah LaTourette and Glenn Holmes**

House Joint Resolution 19
Sponsor Testimony
House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee
November 28, 2018

Chairman Blessing, Vice-Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and distinguished members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer sponsor testimony on House Joint Resolution 19.

We are proud to bring forward this bipartisan resolution in an effort to protect and preserve our state’s constitution and encourage Ohioans to remain active and engaged in their government. We all agree that Ohioans deserve the right to directly shape public policy in order to hold government accountable and responsive to the people it represents. However, as opposed to what we have witnessed especially in recent years, Ohio’s founding document should not be “for sale” to special interest groups—sometimes from outside of Ohio—who wish to promote their own interests through the constitutional amendment process.

HJR 19 aims to address both of these realities in two specific ways.

First, it will protect the integrity of our constitution by:

- Requiring petitions to be filed by April 1st prior to an election. This will give voters at least a full seven months to become aware and educated on a ballot initiative before being asked to vote on it come Election Day;
- It limits to 180 days the amount of time that petition signatures are deemed valid;

- And finally, it increases—from 50 to 60 percent—the threshold required to pass citizen-initiated constitutional amendments.

Second, HJR 19 will encourage citizen involvement through the statutory initiative process by:

- Reducing the number of required signatures from 6 percent to 5 percent in an effort to simplify the requirements for initiating a statute;
- It makes the statutory initiative process more user-friendly by eliminating the supplemental petition and all the specific and minute regulations that go along with it;
- It includes a safe-harbor provision that bars the General Assembly from amending, repealing or suspending any provision of an initiated statute for one full year after the initiative takes effect. This is done to uphold the true will of the people, ensuring their voices are heard and reflected in statute.

We, the sponsors, understand and accept that the proposals outlined in House Joint Resolution 19 are merely a starting point, and we look forward to hearing from and working with our colleagues to address and potentially adjust certain language contained in the resolution.

But we believe that the Ohio constitution must be protected and preserved—and we believe that HJR 19 is an important mechanism for ensuring it is protected.

Chairman Blessing and members of the Committee, thank you again for allowing us to offer sponsor testimony on House Joint Resolution 19. We are happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.