

Dear Chairman Blessing,

I urge you to not modify the Initiative Process that has been in place in our great state for over 100 years. The Initiative Process is an honorable staple of our democracy here in Ohio. It allows citizens to actively participate in the improvement of our democracy. As a person who has actively volunteered in this process in the effort to terminate gerrymandering, I know first hand it is anything but easy. As a volunteer I spent an average of 20-30 hours a week for over a year on the Fair Districts Fair Elections ballot measure. It took tremendous sacrifice to do so, as I also worked full time during this process. I did it though, because I believed in our great state and nation. I consider the act of citizens working collaboratively on an Initiative to improve our home state one of the greatest acts of patriotism a citizen can do. Do not take these proposed over reaching steps to remove this patriotic responsibility from our citizens.

I understand there may be frustration among some over money and time spent from groups proposing amendments. However, our electorate has proven at the ballot box which of these initiatives are worthy. There is not a need for the legislature to remove responsibility from registered voters to make those decisions for us. The legislative body serves at the privilege of the electorate. That is the core tenant of our great nation. HJR19 seeks to remove power from the electorate. The proposed changes will also only encourage well funded "outside" groups to become even more active in Ohio. The proposed changes are so severe, that a volunteer army could never achieve success and would have to instead use paid petitioners and pay for extensive media coverage.

The proposed changes are also disrespectful to the citizens of Ohio who love Ohio enough to become involved in the electoral process. In addition to gathering hundreds of signatures I also recruited and encouraged volunteers to keep on volunteering for days, weeks and months on end. While others enjoyed themselves relaxing and watching tv thousands of patriotic volunteers spent long hours standing on their feet talking to their neighbors about their love of country and the need to end gerrymandering. Many of the volunteers I worked with were elderly, including a dear fellow church member in her late 70s who collected signatures at her local park. Those who support HJR19 are telling these patriotic elderly citizens, including my dear church member, that they must now stand outside in the cold, snow and rain. I believe as our elected representatives you can and must to be better than this.

If the legislature is truly interested in curbing multiple voter driven ballot initiatives in Ohio it would do best to listen to the electorate and the needs of Ohio. We as citizens only bring forth ballot initiatives when our legislature has failed to take proper action. I respectfully request you to honor our state democracy, respect our patriotic citizens, and trust our electorate by voting no on HJR19.

Respectfully,

Heather Tuck-Macalla