

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM K. WEISENBERG
BEFORE THE OHIO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

December 6, 2018
House Joint Resolution 19

My name is Bill Weisenberg and I appear today in my personal capacity, not as a representative of any organization or entity. I speak as an interested party on the Resolution.

- A. I commend the General Assembly and this Committee for taking up the subject of the Ohio Constitution and the process by which amendments to the Constitution are offered and considered as well as citizen-initiated statutory changes. The subject needs examination.
- B. Rep. Ginter commented on the public not knowing oftentimes what they are signing when asked to sign a petition: is it to amend the Constitution or address a statute; what is the difference and what are they told.

This gets down to basic civic education, something that is lacking today and leaves the public without a basic understanding of the very structure of our governmental institutions and how it impacts their lives. More needs to be done to address this.

- C. What is contained in the Constitution and what needs to be addressed in statute needs to be clearly enumerated and the General Assembly is the place to debate and consider many issues that have been pursued via the constitutional route. Issue 1 is a prime example. Simplifying the statutory route is definitely worthy of examination and consideration.
- D. Finally, with regard to amendments to the Constitution, it is a delicate task and should the threshold for amendments be increased beyond the current simple majority, I recommend 55% for both amendments that are citizen initiated and those that evolve from the General Assembly. Parity should be the benchmark for both!