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RE: H.J.R. 19: Modify the Initiative Process

**To the State of Ohio Government Accountability and Oversight Committee:**

I strongly oppose S.J.R. 19 that will further restrict regular citizens from have a say in our government policies than we already have.

I have participated in several very popular citizen initiatives over the last several years, and they rarely got a fighting chance to prevail. This is because regular citizens are up against the massive power of corporate money, propaganda, and lobbyists. Consequently, we are not the ones directing our policies. Corporations are.

What is my evidence?

I can give you many examples, though the most obvious one at the moment is HJR 19. This resolution does not emanate from the people. There is not a groundswell of Ohioans begging the General Assembly to make the citizen initiative process harder to do. Clearly this resolution did not come from us. Who or what then is behind it?

Amazingly, extremely popular citizens initiatives that are designed to protect Ohioans typically fail to gain even a small slice of the attention from our representative as corporate-driven ones, including HJR 19. Despite how many hours we the people volunteer, signatures we collect, or obstacles we overcome, our initiatives rarely have anywhere near the opportunity to gain a place on the ballot than those that the General Assembly introduces. Instead, they are snuffed out first or, in the few times they make it on to the ballot, outspent with misleading ads. The upshot of it all? The enactment of yet even more legal loopholes to stifle further attempts.

If you want to further endanger democracy in our great state, then vote for HJR 19, because that is exactly what this resolution will do. That is what it is designed to do. If this seems far-fetched to you, then talk to the people who have been through the citizen initiative wringer. I and others welcome any inquiries you may have.

As our state representatives, you must put the people of Ohio and our issues first, or at least, you should put us first. The final voting on this resolution will provide a litmus test as to whether you stand with the people of Ohio or with the corporations. After hearing our testimonies and understanding how dangerous HJR is to the genuine democratic participation, I sincerely trust it is for the former.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Most sincerely,  
Sandy Bolzenius