

Written Testimony for House Government Oversight Committee
Michel A. Coconis, PhD, MSW
3920 Orange Blossom Lane
Columbus, Ohio 43230
614-447-0012

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To Chairperson Wilkin and member of the Government Oversight Committee:

I am testifying today in opposition to HJR6, a bill that increases the numbers of voters necessary to pass citizen initiatives here in Ohio. I have been a part of these initiatives since I was a freshman in college when I worked on an initiative that sought to place a fee on soft drinks. Admittedly, that time, I was doing the collection of signatures as a job. I did not feel connected to the issue. Through the 44 years since, I have been a part of signature collection efforts for 7 initiatives that I did feel strongly about, having an ideology and belief and understanding of policy that compelled me to act as a volunteer – standing in the heat, standing in the cold and wind, standing near doorways seeking to convince others to spend two-three minutes speaking with us or reading our materials to make our case to the public for their signatures. One faces a lot of rejection, as you likely know, to interrupting people “on their way” to do something they already think is important and people are more afraid of strangers and reaching out to neighbors is more challenging in 2022 than it was in 1992, 2002, 2012 each decade being more difficult. Still, people with an idea that they believe in and want to stand up to make change will endure these difficult conditions to work to make their idea a reality – to get on the ballot!

This is a time-consuming effort and leads to more defeats in signatures than wins. The process is already difficult and renders the need to raise the number “a solution in search of a problem” in Ohio.

If there was evidence of actual abuse or wrong-doing, I, a reasonable person, could have that explained to me. To have it be about a political response to other legislation or imagined legislative efforts is NOT evidence.

Please carefully consider what it means to groups of any ideology at any time in history. While one party does have a supermajority, with that power should come power and grace for others in our communities and state.

I am convinced that should you carefully weigh what the people need (including you when you are no longer in office) as to having a voice in statewide policy matters against the proposed bill’s impact against no problem or threat, you will vote against the passage of HJR6 or any amendments that seeks to achieve a similar goal.

Thank you for your time today.