



Pro-Choice Ohio

Good afternoon, Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair White, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee. My name is Jaime Miracle. I am the Deputy Director for Pro-Choice Ohio, a statewide organization that advocates for abortion rights and reproductive freedom for all Ohioans. I am here to testify today on behalf of our staff, volunteers, and supporters across the state, in opposition to Substitute House Joint Resolution 6.

In any functional, healthy democracy the voices of the people must be heard. Unfortunately, in Ohio these voices are getting harder and harder to hear in our rigged political process. Despite the continuous attacks on abortion access by the Ohio General Assembly, poll after poll shows that the majority of Ohioans support abortion access. Just this Summer a poll found that 82% of Ohioans support abortion access in some form. But despite broad support for abortion, earlier this year Ohioans suffered the harms inflicted by this legislature for nearly three months as the 6-week abortion ban was enforced in our state.

Countless people had to travel out of state to get access to the healthcare they needed. People across this state were forced to travel or continue a pregnancy against their will. Some risked their health to travel, others faced the daunting cost to take multiple days off work and travel across state lines for healthcare. The same people are impacted by so much of the other harmful legislation passed out of this legislature - Black, Brown, Latine, Indigenous, and other Ohioans of color, young Ohioans, Ohioans with disabilities, Ohioans living in poverty, Ohioans living in rural areas, and LGBTQ+ Ohioans are also the ones disproportionately impacted by harmful abortion bans.

Abortion is not the only issue that legislators disregard Ohioans' voices on. In 2018, voters overwhelmingly passed legislative redistricting reform. As often happens in this building, this overwhelming majority of voters was ignored last year when this legislature passed unconstitutionally gerrymandered maps over and over and over again. Time and again this legislature shows that maintaining their own political power is more important than doing their job, which is to represent the will of the people. Ballot initiatives are the only way Ohioans have to show this legislature what we want our state to be; and now with HJR 6, the legislature is once again changing the rules to rig the system, to take away the power of the people, and consolidate power within the legislature.

This legislature knows that the policies they propose and pass do not respect the power of the people. This has never been more evident than in this post-election legislative session. With little or no time for public input, you've shoved through, policies that will directly, negatively impact the lives of people across our state. If these policies are so popular, why rush? Why limit the public's ability to weigh in and let the legislature know how they feel? The only reason is

that you know just how unpopular your positions are. You want to rush them through as quickly as possible in the hopes that the voters will forget about them before you are on the ballot again. We are all here today to make sure you know that the people are watching. The people will not forget.

Voters across our state must have access to the ballot to pass initiatives that help our communities, that make Ohio a state where all can thrive, not just merely survive. HJR 6 is another example of a long line of proposals that rewrite the rules, and limits the voices of Ohioans. Ohioans will not stand for this. I strongly urge a NO vote on Substitute HJR 6.