

OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF:

Shireen Shaaban
4985 Cemetery Rd
Hilliard, Ohio 43026

IN OPPOSITION OF:

H. J. R. No. 6 — C A: Require 60% vote for initiated constitutional amendment

[Columbus, OH, 12/07/22] — Dear Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Brown, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee. My name is Shireen Shaaban, and I am the Community Relations Assistant for the Ohio Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, known as CAIR-Ohio. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify to House Joint Resolution 6.

CAIR-Ohio is Ohio's only organization dedicated to protecting the civil liberties of Ohio Muslims. We work to encourage dialogue, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding. We are urging you to vote no on Ohio House Joint Resolution 6 (HJR 6) as it would make it harder to pass citizen-led ballot initiatives.

- Under HJR 6, if citizens spend months collecting signatures to put an amendment on Ohio's ballot, their initiative will need an outrageous 60% of votes to become law.
- HJR 6 would enshrine minority rule in our constitution. Just 41% of voters could block what the majority of voters want.
- Polls show Ohioans disagree with the Statehouse supermajority on dozens of key issues. Collecting signatures and taking an amendment to the ballot is really the only option Ohioans have left to get these policy reforms.

Our democracy is threatened when voting rights are under attack. HJR6 poses barriers for Ohioans to pass a citizen-led ballot initiative to amend the state constitution.

Proposals like HJR6 affect a wide range of issues, including redistricting reform. This impacts not only voting rights, but healthcare access, access to education, civil and economic justice, and much more. All of which are issues we combat regularly in our office. Resolutions like this obstruct the voting rights of every Ohioan. HJR6 would also negate our continuous efforts as an organization to empower Muslims and underrepresented communities.

Making the ballot initiative process even harder for citizens groups will make it almost impossible for anyone except big money special interests to successfully pass a ballot initiative in Ohio. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on HJR 6. Thank you so much for your time.