



**Opposition Testimony to House Joint Resolution 6
Ohio House Government Oversight Committee
Catherine Turcer, Common Cause Ohio
December 8, 2022**

Chairman Wilkin, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Brown, and esteemed members of the Government Oversight Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I am the executive director of Common Cause Ohio and we are committed to open and accountable government that serves the public interest. That's why we have worked so hard over the years to establish fair rules for creating voting districts and why we and many others have turned toward citizen initiatives when the state legislature failed to act.

Since 1912, Ohioans from across the political spectrum have utilized the right to amend our Constitution via the petition process. Direct democracy gives voters the ability to make a real impact and has helped engage Ohioans in the political process. There is no justifiable reason, after over 100 years, to suddenly make this already challenging process even harder.

[Citizen initiatives are not overused](#). There hasn't been a citizen initiated ballot measure before voters since 2018. Over the past 10 years, there were only four elections with ballot measures through signature collection. In the past 50 years, there were 28 years without a citizen initiative on the ballot. Of those elections that had a ballot measure, only a handful of the elections had more than one issue for voters to consider.

There are already protections in place to address concerns about monopolies, [the Ohio Initiated Monopolies Amendment of 2015](#). These changes to the Ohio Constitution were passed by Ohio voters to address concerns about wealthy interests abusing the process.

Requiring a 60% supermajority to pass ballot measures breaks the intention and balance of the Ohio Constitution. This higher threshold thwarts the tradition of majority rule and will likely have the *opposite* of the sponsor's desired effect: it will make it almost impossible for anyone *except* big money special interests to successfully pass a citizen initiated ballot measure.

It simply doesn't make sense to rush through potential revisions to the Ohio Constitution during the final days of session. What's the rush?

Amendments to the Ohio Constitution are significant and should be widely debated and voted on. Why place a constitutional amendment on a primary ballot during an odd-numbered? To be truly respectful of the Ohio Constitution, why not pause, gather more information, engage in a robust debate, and if you and other legislators believe that it is truly necessary and the best course of action, place the reform on a ballot with robust participation?

I urge you to oppose House Joint Resolution 6. Thank you for this opportunity to share my concerns with you.