

Dear Chair Plummer, Vice Chair Hillyer, Ranking Member Russo, and members of the Senate House Constitutional Resolutions Committee,

Thank you for considering my testimony in opposition to HJR 1, which is not only unnecessary, but is a direct attack on our democratic system. If passed, HJR 1 would require a 60% vote to approve any constitutional amendment. Further, it would eliminate the 10-day cure period to gather additional signatures for a citizen-led ballot initiative. Instead of requiring signatures from half of Ohio's counties, it would require the signatures of at least five percent of the electors of every county in the state.

It is already very difficult for citizens to make their voices heard, which is why citizen-led constitutional amendments are so rarely placed on the ballot. Currently, an amendment proposed by the Ohio legislature can be placed on the ballot for a primary election, but voters can only place a proposed amendment on the ballot in a general election. This already puts voters at a disadvantage when trying to make their voices heard on issues the legislature has ignored. Further, the signature requirement is already stringent, and particularly difficult since citizen-led initiatives rely heavily on volunteers. While citizens spend months gathering signatures to place an initiative on the ballot, only 19 out of 71 citizen initiated constitutional amendments since 1912 have actually passed in Ohio! That's only a 27% success rate under the current requirement of a simple majority vote.

HJR 1 would enshrine minority rule into our state constitution. I vigorously oppose this resolution, and any measure that makes it harder for voters to amend the Ohio Constitution.

Sincerely,
Deborah Cooper
Worthington, OH