



**Opponent Testimony - written**  
**House Joint Resolution 1**  
**Jona Hilario**  
**OPAWL Co-Director**  
**Ohio House Constitutional Resolutions Committee**  
**April 15, 2023**

Chairman Plummer and members of the House Constitutional Resolutions Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony. My name is Jona Hilario, I am a resident of Columbus, Ohio and current Statewide Co-Director of OPAWL. We are a statewide grassroots community of Asian and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Women and non-binary people in Ohio. Our organization is a multi-ethnic, multi-generational community and we represent the diverse diaspora from Asia and the Pacific Islands.

OPAWL urges this committee to commit to fairness and democracy and reject House Joint Resolution 1.

I was naturalized as a citizen of this country just this past November after residing here for almost 18 years and being a permanent resident for 14 years. During that time I set down roots in Columbus, had a family, bought a house and started an organization that among other things worked to engage the AAPI community in the democratic process. During the 2020 elections we had 10000 conversations with AAPI voters in Ohio to ensure that they knew how to vote safely while the pandemic was raging. As someone who then did not have the right to vote I worked many many hours convincing those who did that elections matter, that lifting up their voices through the ballot box will ensure that their interests and needs can be addressed.

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Now that I myself will be able to practice my right to vote as an American citizen I am frankly very enraged at this resolution in front of us right now. This is a clear undemocratic effort to take away my right as an American citizen to have an equal say in what happens to our state. The extremist members of this house who support this resolution value the influence of lobbyists and special interests over the will of the majority of the people of Ohio. They know that they do not represent Ohio voters therefore they are openly advocating stripping power from the people to have a direct say in our government through our traditional, proven and fair ballot initiative process.

I ask this commission to reject this resolution and show Ohioans that you value fairness and uphold the sacred American principle of one person one vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Jona Hilario

Co-Director

OPAWL-Building AAPI feminist leadership

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