



To: House Constitutional Resolutions Committee  
From: Kayla Griffin, Ohio State Director, All Voting is Local/Action  
Date: Apr 17, 2023  
Re: Opposing Testimony on HJR1

My name is Kayla Griffin, and I am the Ohio State Director at All Voting is Local Action, an organization that exists to expose and dismantle threats to voter freedom in order to make voting safe, fair, and accessible, to build a democracy for us all. AVL Action Ohio is also a member of the Ohio Voter Rights Coalition, a coalition of pro-voter organizations. We are here in strong opposition to Senate Joint Resolution 2.

As an attorney I know that the term, "*We the People*" carries weight. It is more than a colloquialism. It is a fundamental principle that sets this country apart from the rest.

As a Black woman, I know the words "*We the People*" have often been reserved for people that do not look like me. When those words were written in 1787, my ancestors were deemed only three fifths a person. My great great grandparents were brutalized under the Jim Crow South and migrated to the north to guarantee their right to vote.

This is not history that is far distant from any of us. As a Black woman, the right to vote was not even granted to women just like me until 1965 - meaning there are some of us alive today who can recall a time before this victory.

This proposal is UNDEMOCRATIC. It is UNFAIR. It is UNPOPULAR, and it is UNNECESSARY!

It is undemocratic because it undermines the sacred principles of one (1) person, one (1) vote!! It ends majority rule in Ohio as we know it. And ending majority rule means only one thing: the complete undermining of democracy.

This resolution will require 60% of the vote for a ballot initiative to pass. How is it fair to allow 41 percent of voters to block initiatives that a majority want? This would take away our right to decide what happens in our state through direct democracy - the very safety net that we have to shield us from extreme, out of touch politicians.



Speaking of out of touch politicians, you should not be allowed to rewrite the rules so you can get what you want instead of what the people want. Democracy is about *We the People*.

Special interests and lobbyists are pushing this constitutional amendment because they can control politicians, but they can not control us! They don't control the people!

Effectively making it nearly impossible for ballot initiatives to pass means more power for big money special interest groups and less power for voters to decide the issues that matter to them the most. But Ohioans will not be controlled by special interest! *We the People* have a voice!

Our constitutions, both federal and state, have come so far to actually living up to the democratic ideals that this country was founded upon. One of those principles is that governments are instituted to derive their just powers from the consent of the governed.

There is nothing just about this amendment, and we the people certainly do not consent to it. If there is any question about what our founders thought should happen when “*any* form Government becomes destructive of these ends,” the Declaration of Independence affirms that “it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.”

If this is passed, we will mobilize and work to turnout Ohioans in the most historic August election this state has ever seen! We will never, ever stop making our voices heard, even through every attempt to silence us. For our safety. For our happiness.

This proposal shreds our Constitution and attempts to unravel democracy. It is an embarrassment to every legislator supporting it, so I urge you to vote NO on House Joint Resolution 1, especially if you believe in our democracy and principle of *We the People*.