



Ohio House Constitutional Resolutions Committee

HJR 1 — Opposition Testimony

April 19, 2023

Chairman Plummer, Vice Chair Hillyer, Ranking Member Mohamed, and members of the House Constitutional Resolutions Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Desiree Tims. I serve as president and CEO of Innovation Ohio and Innovation Ohio Education Fund. We partner with a wide range of prominent Ohio organizations representing dozens of policy interests. We also work with diverse communities to share information about important legislation moving through our Statehouse.

I provided opposition testimony against HJR6 in December, since then, our numbers have only grown and opposition to this proposal is overwhelming. The number of organizations joining our coalition voicing opposition to this proposal has nearly doubled since HJR6 was defeated. Ohioans are seeing through this blatant political power-grab. That is why I am confident Ohioans will reject HJR1.

Ohioans have had the power to collect signatures and amend their constitution with a simple majority vote for 110 years. HJR1 takes that constitutionally-protected power away from Ohio citizens and gives more power to politicians. Shifting power from people to politicians is never going to be a popular idea. It will not have public support at the ballot box.

Furthermore, HJR1 shreds our constitution as we know it, by allowing just a small number of voters to dictate the future of our state. That is not how our state should operate. If a majority of voters head to the polls and vote in favor of a constitutional amendment proposed by their fellow citizens, that amendment should become law. Ohioans also know that HJR1 is completely unnecessary. Ohio's ballot initiative process is already incredibly difficult and our state constitution is already well protected. The people's right to amend it should not be diminished.

Finally, we are now discussing the possibility of adding HJR1 to a brand new special election this year, costing taxpayers \$20M. This isn't about keeping special and outside interests out of our state, it isn't about protecting the constitution or the voice of Ohioans, and it is not about strengthening our democracy— it's about power and control.

Please consider my testimony — and the testimony of everyone here today. I urge you to vote NO on this unpopular, undemocratic resolution.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I am happy to take any questions you may have.