

Opponent Testimony
HJR1
Constitutional Resolutions Committee
Wednesday, April 19

Chair Plummer, Vice Chair Hillyer, Ranking Member Mohamed, and the rest of the Constitutional Resolutions Committee. My name is Susan Reis, and I am State Policy Advocate of Ohio for National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW.) NCJW is an organization of ~2500 members and supporters across Ohio.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to state our opposition to HJR1, a bill that would require future constitutional amendments to be approved by 60% of the voters, eliminate a 10-day cure period and require 5% of the voters in the previous Gubernatorial election in all 88 counties to sign the petition to get a citizen initiated constitutional amendment on the ballot, instead of the 44 counties currently required.

It is undemocratic, to say the least, to see Ohio legislators manipulating the system so they can get a specific result... this undermines the will of the people. Just a few short months ago state lawmakers voted to scrap August elections as they are overly expensive (\$20 million) and anti-democratic, given the meager voter turnout (limaohio.com, April 15.) Legislating to defeat one issue is NOT legislating to do the "people's work," as you are there to do. In 110 years, since 1913, when citizen-initiated ballot measures were put into Ohio law, there have only been 71 citizen-initiated ballot measures. Ohioans have only approved 20 of them, rejecting 51. This is not a record that screams for revision. This system is working as it should in allowing Ohioans to decide what they want to see in their laws.

The current requirements to put an issue on the ballot are monumental, as anyone who has worked to meet those requirements knows. A meaningful number of voters are already required to sign petitions to give all voters a chance to vote on the citizen-initiated issues.

Legislating to defeat one specific issue is short-sighted and anti-citizen. Both conservatives and liberals have voiced their opposition to this measure. Ohioans are not deceived by these callous antics, and do not want to see \$20 million dollars wasted on this attempt to overrule the will of the people.

Please vote no on HJR1.

Thank you.

National Council of Jewish Women/Cleveland inspired by Jewish values to advance social and economic justice for all women, children and families.

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