

**OPPONENT TESTIMONY OF:**

Amina Barhumi  
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**IN OPPOSITION OF:**

H. J. R. No. 1 — C A: Require 60% vote for initiated constitutional amendment.

**[Columbus, OH, 04/18/23]**—Dear Chairman Plummer, Vice Chair Hillyer, Ranking Member Mohamed, and members of the House Constitutional Resolutions Committee. My name is Amina Barhumi, and I am the Executive Director for the Ohio Chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, known as CAIR-Ohio. Thank you so much for the opportunity to testify on House Joint Resolution 1.

CAIR-Ohio is the state's only organization dedicated to protecting the civil liberties of Ohio Muslims. We work to encourage dialogue, empower American Muslims, and build coalitions that promote justice and mutual understanding. We urge you to vote no on Ohio House Joint Resolution 1 (HJR 1) as it would make it harder to pass citizen-led ballot initiatives.

- Under HJR 1, if citizens spend months collecting signatures to put an amendment on Ohio's ballot, their initiative will need 60% of votes to become law.
- This is unnecessary and unfair because HJR 1 would enshrine minority rule in our constitution. Just 41% of voters could block what the majority of voters want.
- And HJR1 would make it harder for issues to get onto the ballot by requiring signature collection in all 88 counties and removing the "cure period," after signatures are turned in when a campaign is allowed to go back out and collect more to try to make up for a shortfall.
- This is unpopular because polls show Ohioans disagree with the Statehouse supermajority on dozens of key issues. Collecting signatures and taking an amendment to the ballot is really the only option Ohioans have left to reform these policies.
- This is undemocratic because it removes the ability of Ohioans to pass citizen-initiated ballot measures.

Our democracy cannot be fully called one, when the basic tenant and bedrock of democracy, of allowing citizens to have a say in their government, are made more difficult. HJR1 poses barriers for Ohioans to pass a citizen-led ballot initiative to amend the state constitution, as a democracy it is imperative to facilitate, and provide access to the public to voice their concerns and lead ballot initiatives.

Proposals like HJR1 affect a wide range of issues, including redistricting reform. This impacts not only voting rights, but healthcare access, access to education, civil and economic justice, and much more. All of which are issues we combat regularly as an organization. Resolutions like this obstruct the voting rights of every Ohioan. HJR1 would also negate our continuous efforts as an organization to empower Muslims and underrepresented communities.

Making the ballot initiative process even harder for citizens groups will make it almost impossible for anyone except big money special interests to successfully pass a ballot initiative in Ohio. It is undemocratic, unfair, unnecessary, and unpopular. I ask you to consider my testimony and vote NO on HJR 1. Thank you so much for your time.