

I stand today in opposition to HJR1. I believe that this is a very dangerous proposal because it is undemocratic, unnecessary, and unpopular.

I am a retired high school social studies teacher. More specifically, I taught American Government and AP US Government and Politics. Over my 39 year teaching career I taught thousands of high school seniors that there are certain bedrock principles on which our system of representative democracy is built. One of those principles is the idea of majority rule. Majority rule is of course the idea that things are decided in favor of whichever side has more than fifty percent of the vote. The minority has rights that can't be trampled and can try to become the majority, but the majority decides the issue. HJR1 attempts to give the minority the power to decide the outcome of any citizen initiated constitutional amendment, as 41% of voters could overrule what 59% of Ohio voters favor.

I also taught my students the fundamental principle that in a democracy the people are in charge of their government. That is why I introduced them to various ways that ordinary citizens can have their voices be heard, including initiative and referendum. These practices are available and useful tools when the legislature acts in ways that are out of touch with the views of the majority. Citizen- led initiatives only pass when people believe that their representatives are not being responsive to the wishes of the majority. It is already very difficult for such initiatives to be passed. Making it harder for ballot initiatives to pass means more power for special interests and those entrenched in power and less power for ordinary citizens to decide the issues that matter most to them.

When I taught about redistricting and the practice of gerrymandering, most of my students were shocked and dismayed to learn about the maneuvering politicians do, in order to gain political advantage. Extreme gerrymandering leads to extreme policies. Many ordinary citizens are already disenchanted with government and feel that their voices aren't listened to by those in power. Efforts such as HJR1 increase distrust of politicians. Making it more difficult for people to have their voices heard and diluting the democratic principle of majority rule will lead to increased cynicism and anger toward elected officials.

For these reasons I implore you to vote NO on HJR1.