

WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: 4/18/2023

Name: Valerie Lee

Are you representing: Yourself Organization

Organization (If Applicable): _____

Position/Title: _____

Address: 5000 Sycamore Woods Blvd

City: Dayton State: OH Zip: 45426

Best Contact Telephone: 937-837-5483 Email: leev5849@gmail.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): HJR1/SJR2

Specific Issue: Ohio Constitutional Amendment

Are you testifying as a: Proponent Opponent Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? none

Please provide a brief statement on your position: HJR1 and SJR2 would tie the hands of the citizenry as they exercise their right to participatory democracy. I encourage the totality of our representative body to oppose these anti-democratic pieces of legislation. Our children are watching.

Written Testimony

My dad was a quiet man but he always was part of our system of a representative democracy. He passed on his spirit of "We the People" to me. When I came of age to vote, I was afraid to exercise my right to vote being intimidated by the voting machines enclosing the voter behind a curtain. Perhaps if civics education had been taught in our public school system, I would have been well informed and assumed my obligation as a citizen to participate in our democracy by voting at an earlier age.

I am sharing these thoughts while writing my opposition to HJR1/SJR2. I grew up during a time when voting was allowed amongst members of the African American community. The political parties had policies and positions that were communicated to the voting public so the informed electorate could vote for the person who best reflected their views. Now that I have entered my sunset years, our political parties and the electorate have deep divisions and votes often are cast based on cultural issues. Districts have been skillfully gerrymandered thus diluting the power of the vote within various communities.

I give you this historical framework as I express my strong belief that HJR1/SJR2 will only further erode our path back to a participatory democracy. This legislation was designed to take away the only avenue available to those whose voices have not been equally heard due to voter suppression tactics. Those actively engaged with giving the majority a fair hearing find it necessary to use the constitutional amendment process with attainable standards. It may not be easy to achieve but it has proven to be doable.

As a legislator, you have taken an oath to represent We The People. That means giving all of the people fair representation. That being the case the only choice you have is to vote against HJR1 allowing the voices of the people to be heard.