

Ohio House Constitutional Resolutions Committee
Committee Chair Phil Plummer

Opposition Testimony for HJR 1

Ann Shroyer
April 19, 2023

Chairman Plummer, Vice Chair Hudson Hillyer, Ranking Member Mohamed, and members of the House Constitutional Resolutions Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Ann Shroyer. I am testifying in opposition to HJR1 because it strips power from Ohioans and undermines the principle of one person one vote. The unconstitutionally gerrymandered districts in this state have already stripped my community of solid representation in my city of Westerville, especially our school district. In the school district of 14,000 students with 100,000 residents we are in 3 different House Districts, 3 State Senate Districts, and 3 Congressional Districts. Even when looking at just the City of Westerville, we are in 3 different Congressional Districts for 38,000 people - thus watering down our community's representation. When I have testified in front of the redistricting committee about this, the Governor fell asleep while I spoke, so I am continually reminded about how little voice I have in this state's government. I have also sat in hearings about guns everywhere bills, where the proponent testimony is primarily from lobbyists from out of state and the opposition testimony is all from citizens across the state of Ohio. So it is laughable that increasing the benchmark to a supermajority of voters to pass a ballot initiative will somehow protect Ohioans from outside money affecting our laws in the state - when in fact it will only make it harder for Ohio voters to initiate changes in the State Constitution by making it more expensive to pass a ballot initiative - giving the advantage to corporate interests and lobbying groups, NOT actual Ohio voters.

The ballot initiative in its current form has been a part of the Ohio Constitution for over 100 years - why the sudden need to change it if not to protect the supermajority that proposes this change?

Our state continues to lose young people. We are older, less healthy, and less educated than most other states in the country. We have lost 3 congressional seats in the last 11 years - perhaps the steady drum on anti-democratic laws being passed in this state are part of the reason for the exodus.

Thank you for your attention.