

Chair Plummer, Vice Chair Hillyer, Ranking Member Mohamed, and other members of the House Constitutional Resolutions Committee. My name is Rev. Dan Clark. I am the Ohio Director for Faith in Public Life Action and a resident of Licking County. As a person of faith and a concerned Ohioan, I demand you oppose and vote NO on HJR1. It is unwise, unnecessary, undemocratic and unpopular to change the Constitution and lock in the power of the minority to rule over the majority. Our democracy is based on one person, one vote. It is your duty to act to preserve our democracy and protect access to the ballot for all Ohioans. My faith teaches me that we love our neighbors by listening to them. Our sacred freedom to vote is one of the most important ways in which we hear the voices and concerns of those around us. These resolutions silence the voices of those who must be heard in our state. I want to take this opportunity to share with you how other faith leaders around Ohio and from different faith traditions feel about HJR1:

Rev. Dr. Jack Sullivan, Jr. of The Ohio Council of Churches and a resident of Canal Winchester says, "A key component to human flourishing and abundant living is the ability to participate in the democratic process of crafting laws and shaping policies that impact and influence the ways we live. HJR1 is an affront to God's expectation for human flourishing and design for abundant life."

Rev. Nelson Pierce, pastor of Beloved Community Church in Cincinnati says, "People's engagement in making the world a better place is a fundamental part of our democracy and a foundational tenet of the Christian faith. For generations Americans of faith and conscience have used the tools of citizen led democracy when elected officials could not or would not pay attention to issues of deep importance. To further restrict this process violates the spirit of this great state and country and runs afoul of the call of the prophets of old."

Deacon Nick Bates of Hunger Network in Ohio and a resident of Columbus says, "As people of faith, we are called to love our neighbors. House Joint Resolution 1 silences the voices of our neighbors. We are called to listen to them and listen to all Ohioans as a way of showing love. That's why we need to reject HJR1 so we can have all our voices heard and valued equally in our state."

And Sister Margie Davis, a Dominican Sister of Peace and resident of Columbus says, "I feel that our democracy is really being threatened by the possible changes of House Joint Resolution 1. We the people don't have much opportunity to have a voice in the process. This takes the everyday person out of the mix."

We are a part of the millions of faithful Ohioans and everyday people who will continue to fight back against unjust propositions like these. Fighting for our democracy is in the spiritual DNA of our collective and diverse faith traditions. The Hebrew prophet Isaiah says, "Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless." I urge you to not make unjust laws, to not issue oppressive decrees. I urge you to vote NO on HJR1 to preserve our democracy and protect access for all Ohioans to the ballot.