

April 18, 2023

**To Chair Rep. Phil Plummer and Members of the Ohio House Constitutional Resolutions Committee:**

Thank you for hearing my testimony opposing HJR 1. I am here to try to understand why anyone in the Ohio Assembly would vote for this resolution. Everyone here today is aware of its intended purposes. With that on the table, I feel compelled to frame my question by stating the obvious. As Ohio lawmakers, and thus servants of the people, why would any Ohio representative support HJR 1?

If Ohioans were pushing for it and its intended results, then I would get it. As you are well aware, however, those of us who know what HJR 1 would do if approved are vehemently oppose to it. So, why is this bill on the table?

I do not understand why a true flag-waving patriot would support a bill that suppresses the democratic rule of the people, hence my question. Why would any of you vote for a law that seeks to virtually block the voices of citizens? I realize that many of you hold positions on gerrymandering, abortion, and other issues that differ from the majority of Ohioans. So long as you are sincere about them, I respect your views on these and every other issue you hold dear, even when they differ from mine. I ask you in turn to respect that in a democracy, each representative has an obligation to represent the interests and views of the majority of the people, not his or her own views.

If HJR 1 and/or its back-up SB2 actually gets on the ballot, then both sides of the issues will be taking our campaigns on the road. For sure, our side does not have your powerful platform or wealthy backers to fund expensive media spots, mailers, and signature gatherers. What we do have is an honest message that speaks to the very heart of what it means to be American and unite the masses in the noble cause of retaining our full citizen initiatives rights. I am sure that your side will find the right words to parade HJR 1 as the real democratic choice even though, if passed, it would work to undermine citizen initiatives.

The notion that your side could win presents a frightening possibility that only strengthens the urgency of my question. Why would any Ohio representative want to win in this case? Surely there was a time in your past when you passionately embraced this country because you truly believed in your good fortune to live in a country that respected your voice at all levels of government. Eventually, all of us realize that there are corrupt forces at work, yet most of us maintain faith in this great experiment of American democracy knowing that there are also safeguards in place to protect our rights and ensure that our interest prevailed.

One of these safeguards in Ohio is the right for citizens to author their own bills. As you know, this was the brainchild of concerned Ohioans in 1912. Appalled by Guided Age-type corruption where the wealthy bought politicians and policies, these genuine patriots fought for citizens' rights to propose bills. For a hundred years, Ohio has greatly benefitted from an engaged citizenry who stood up for democracy when their representatives failed in their task to fully represent the people.

While curious as to why anyone who believes in a government of the People would support HJR 1, perhaps this discussion is best had with your constituents, families, and children with a thought to their children and their futures. I hope that, after acquainted with all of the testimonies, pro and con, all of you give serious thought to why there any support for HJR 1? If you've lost your faith in Americans' ability to reach its noble values, may I call upon you to think back to those days when the promises of democracy burned bright for you. If that celebrated fire has dimmed over time, then please look out to those seated in front of you. We are not giving up. We still believe that in striving for a more perfect union which respects the rule of the majority.

Why any of you would want to go on record for voting against the people's will, I cannot fathom. Nevertheless, when the final vote is taken, we the people will know who stands with us, and who does not.

Respectfully,

Sandy Bolzenius