



Ohio Restaurant Association Testimony in Support of SJR 2

April 27, 2023

Chair Plummer, Vice-Chair Hillyer, Ranking Member Mohamed and Members of the House Constitutional Resolutions Committee:

On behalf of Ohio's 23,676 restaurant and foodservice locations and Ohio's 520,000 restaurant and foodservice employees, the Ohio Restaurant Association appreciates the opportunity to support Senate Joint Resolution 2 and thanks Senators McColley and Gavarone for sponsoring this timely legislation.

We have long advocated for and appreciate the opportunity to write today in support of efforts to give the people of Ohio an opportunity to vote on provisions that would appropriately raise the threshold for changes to Ohio's Constitution. It is appropriate that changes to a government's overarching guidepost, their Constitution, rise to the threshold of issues that rise past the 50%+1 threshold and are issues that a larger share of Ohioans show broad agreement on becoming a new part of our Constitution.

As currently configured, we have seen narrow special interest groups use our State Constitution to enact via Constitutional Amendment policies that were written in such a way as to introduce issues that not only may not have met broad agreement by Ohioans, but directed business opportunities to only those drafting such an amendment. Additional safeguards to the process to meet the threshold of achieving access to the ballot as a Constitutional Amendment could also be beneficial to assuring these goals of achieving and demonstrating broad support from every part of our state as a prerequisite to changing our state's Constitution.

As a group that represents employers, job creators, entrepreneurs and hospitality employees, we worry about threats to Ohio's economic growth and vibrant, thriving communities that are proposed as amendments to Ohio's Constitution. A more appropriate threshold is one way our state's leaders and voters can work to protect Ohio's future economic engines.

Thank you again for the opportunity to support this timely legislation and for all you are doing to help Ohio's hospitality businesses continue to provide robust employment and career opportunities and contribute to vibrant, thriving communities throughout Ohio.

Tod Bowen
Managing Director of External Affairs and Government Relations
Ohio Restaurant Association