

Dear Chair Plummer, Vice Chair Hillyer, Ranking Member Mohamed, and members of the House Constitutional Resolutions Committee,

Thank you for considering my testimony in opposition to Sub. SJR 2, which, if passed, would require a 60% vote to approve any constitutional amendment.

It is already extremely difficult for citizens to make their voices heard, which is why citizen-led constitutional amendments are so rarely placed on the ballot. Currently, an amendment proposed by the Ohio legislature can be placed on the ballot for a primary election, but voters can only place a proposed amendment on the ballot in a general election. This puts voters at a disadvantage. Further, the signature requirement is already stringent, and particularly difficult since citizen-led initiatives rely heavily on volunteers. While citizens spend months gathering signatures to place an initiative on the ballot, only 19 out of 71 citizen initiated constitutional amendments since 1912 have passed in Ohio! That's only a 27% success rate under the current requirement of a simple majority vote.

Former governors Bob Taft, John Kasich, Dick Celeste, and Ted Strickland understand why raising the threshold for passage of citizen-led ballot initiatives is a bad idea. Former Gov. Taft said, "If that (60%) threshold had been in effect during my time as Governor, two signature initiatives, the Clean Ohio Fund and the Third Frontier Project, would not have been approved." He added, "For the state to be able to issue general obligation debt to finance or build highways or schools, to protect the environment or create jobs, you must persuade voters to approve an amendment to the Constitution." (Resource: *Ohio Capital Journal*, Apr. 25, 2023)

Sub. SJR 2 is undemocratic and would enshrine minority rule into our state constitution. I oppose this resolution, and any other measure that makes it harder for voters to amend the Ohio Constitution.

Sincerely,
Deborah Cooper
Worthington, OH