

**Testimony of Mike Knisley, Executive Secretary Treasurer
Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Council
Before the House Constitutional Resolutions Committee
In Opposition to Senate Joint Resolution 2**

Chairman Plummer, Vice Chair Hillyer, Ranking Member Mohamed and Members of the Committee. My name is Mike Knisley. I have the honor of representing the men and women who put hard hats on every day working to build Ohio's future. As the Executive Secretary Treasurer of the Ohio State Building and Construction Trades Council, I am proud to represent over 100,000 highly skilled union construction workers from 14 different trades councils throughout the State of Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in opposition to Senate Joint Resolution 2 (SJR 2).

The history of labor unions in the United States dates back to just five years after the Constitution was ratified when workers realized that using their collective voices allowed for better wages and safer working conditions. Simply put, labor unions were founded on the democratic principle that the voice of the working majority should not be overruled by a small ruling minority. SJR 2 would end majority rule in Ohio as we know it, which strips Ohio voters and my members of the freedom to decide their future.

It also sets an unrealistic threshold for bonding issues to pass. Since 1980, Ohioans have voted on 18 bond issues that directly created work for our members through constructing public projects or improving Ohio's infrastructure. If the proposed language were to be put in place, only 8 of those 18 issues would have passed resulting in substantially less work for our members and hard working Ohioans being left without a job.

Democratic principles are enshrined at the foundation of the labor movement, that no one voice is more valuable than another but a collection of voices can create tangible change. Our dedicated men and women go to work each day to build the Ohio we are all so proud of. They are active members of their community, pay their taxes, and engage in the democratic process each time there is an election. Politicians, lobbyists, and special interests do not have a right to subvert the will of the people, the will of our members.

This is especially true of out-of-state special interests. Recent news reports have brought to light that the effort to pass the supermajority resolution is being funded by a "shadowy group" bankrolled by an Illinois billionaire. It is ironic that a measure first advertised as an attempt to keep out-of-state special interests from tinkering with our constitution is actually the tool of an out-of-state billionaire who wants to do exactly that. Who is he to dictate the voice that Ohioans should have in their government.

I hope that the Members of this Committee will listen to the voices of Ohio workers and citizens, and not out-of-state special interests who think they can buy their way into our Constitution, and vote No on SJR 2.

As always, I encourage any member of the Committee to contact me for additional information or with any questions.

Thank you.