

OHIO FAMILIES UNITE

FOR POLITICAL ACTION AND CHANGE

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Forhan, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Emily Cole, I'm a resident of Hilliard Ohio, and I am the Executive Director of Ohio Families Unite for Political Action and Change, or OFUPAC. The families I stand with and for often disproportionately bear the brunt of the legislative and policy decisions made in this space, given the oppressive expansion of hyper-partisan politics inherent in this general assembly. I am here today to stand for our families in strong opposition to Senate Bill 92.

Similar to House Joint Resolution 1 and Senate Joint Resolution 2, Senate Bill 92 is a dishonest and bad-faith effort to change the rules, *again*, in order to make it harder for Ohioans to protect our freedoms. The legislature decided to eliminate August Special Elections last session because, as per their own statements, these elections have very low voter turnout, are incredibly expensive, waste taxpayer dollars, and do not reflect the will of the majority of Ohioans.

Imagine my surprise when I see this proposal move forward concurrently with an attempt to make it harder to amend our constitution. One could reasonably conclude that any efforts to move Senate Bill 92 with either Senate Joint Resolution 2 or House Joint Resolution 1 are because these efforts *do not, in fact, reflect the will of the majority of Ohioans*. It is appalling that members of this body continue to waste taxpayer dollars in an effort to subvert the will of Ohioans.

All of these efforts are a concerted attempt at rigging our constitution by our Secretary of State in his ill-kept "secret" quest for federal office, through lawmakers seeking to build political will. These same individuals are so afraid to hear from *actual Ohioans* they want to limit our ability to speak, complain when they have to listen, and move election dates to suit their whims.

There are a lot of things Ohioans would love for you to allocate 20 million dollars towards, including fully funding our schools, providing mental healthcare, enhancing opportunities for Ohio's children, caring for Ohioans aging in place,

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and so on and so forth. I'm positive my colleagues and I could happily provide you with a hundred different ways to spend 20 million dollars, in programs that would actually impact the lives of everyday Ohioans. An August special election simply doesn't make the list.

I'd also like to take a moment to correct the record on what an outside special interest even is. Frankly, if we look at the power dynamics in our statehouse, *we as Ohioans* are outside special interests, because we are outside the sphere of power. Our legislature does not look like us, either demographically or politically.

Know this - we as Ohioans will continue to stand up, speak out, and organize to defeat any effort that attempts to silence the majority to benefit the minority. We do this work from the heart, with a scrappy and dogged determination to build an Ohio that is fair for us *all* and free from a gerrymandered supermajority rigging each and every aspect of our political power spectrum to rule.

I urge you to vote no on Senate Bill 92 and employ a semblance of fiscal responsibility. I also promise you that the Ohio that will turn out to vote in a special election if you pass it is not the Ohio you've been betting on.

We've made sure of it.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Emily Cole
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