

Opponent Testimony by Steve Charron on Senate Bill 158
Government Oversight Committee
October 10th, 2023

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to present opponent testimony on SB 158. My name is Steve Charron and I am writing to oppose the passage of Senate Bill 158.

Cleveland voters deserve their right to vote on Issue 38 in November. Just like Clevelanders, voters in every municipality in Ohio deserve the opportunity to vote on local, citizen-led ballot initiatives. SB 158 infringes on that right.

The Home Rule Amendment to Ohio's Constitution vests municipalities with the power to legislate on issues of most concern to that locality. Ideally, the concept of home rule creates shared powers between the state and the municipality, with local governments and their constituents making the decisions that best suit their specific needs, as they are more in touch with their communities needs than the elected officials at a distant statehouse. This is one of the core promises and positions of the Republican Party--small government, staying out of the way of the people, and their desire to mold their life to suit them. SB 158 flies in direct conflict with that.

If you believe citizen-led initiatives like Participatory Budgeting are flawed, that's ok. If it's not what you would want for your city, you can vote against it--in your city. But pre-empting a qualified and duly submitted ballot initiative flies in the face of what the party claims to believe in. At best it is an overzealous attempt to stop a change in how communities manage themselves. It sends a clear message that the Republican Party does not believe in small government, but believes only in THEIR government.

Sincerely,
- Steve Charron