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House Government Oversight Committee

Ohio House of Representatives
135th General Assembly
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, OH 43215-4275

Dear Chairman Peterson, Vice Chairman Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the committee,

I am writing to oppose the proposed restriction on participatory budgeting. I first learned about participatory budgeting when a fellow Clevelander approached me at Edgewater Beach over the summer and asked if I would sign to bring the issue to ballot. At the time I didn't know much about participatory budgeting but the brief pitch sounded appealing and low risk and I was in favor of letting us Clevelanders vote and decide on the issue.

Since then I've done more research about participatory budgeting and I think it sounds like a great opportunity for the community to come together and learn about how our complex city functions and how we can influence positive change. A couple weeks ago I heard Molly Martin with PB CLE call the process "a good onramp to civic engagement" and after reading and watching a lot of videos about it over the last few weeks, I'm very inclined to agree.

I heard the Senate committee ask a lot of very specific questions about the proposal in Cleveland - how would the process be administered - and the folks with PBCLE were prepared with lessons from other communities and information on best practices. We shouldn't throw out or ban a whole new process because it hasn't been perfected yet - it's exciting to think we can be part of developing and shaping this new democratic tool.

I've come to conclude participatory budgeting could be a really great option for Cleveland, and at least one I'd like us to try. We should be able to make these local decisions locally. Squashing a local initiative from the State House is very discouraging for citizens and has the exact opposite feeling from

participatory budgeting. Over ten thousand people signed the petition in Cleveland. Let us vote!

Thank you for your time and attention,

Sincerely,

Colleen Boyd