

Opponent Testimony by Christian Omar Medina (Bishop Omar Medina) 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 Christian Omar Medina (Bishop Omar Medina) 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.

Senate Bill 158 is fundamentally wrong.

It is a bill that takes for granted and tries to supercede the constitutional authority of not just Cleveland, but all cities and villages throughout all of Ohio, to exercise their rights of local self governance and to use their own discretion on how to properly allocate and spend their own funds and resources.

It is also a bill that sets a very dangerous precedent against our democratic system. The process of collecting signatures and introducing ballot initiatives has been one that has always been respected and followed. It is a legal process by which voters can introduce issues that are important to them and create avenues for impactful changes in their respective communities. It is, and should continue to be, a pivotal part of our democratic process.

Senate Bill 158 not only takes for granted the rights of self governance of every city and village in the State, but it also takes for granted the voices of the people. It is a bill that tries to silence the voices of the same people who elected every government official into office. A bill that basically says, we will only allow ballot initiatives that are to our liking. A bill that has forgotten the most important and fundamental truth of what our democracy is all about, the foundation which this country was founded upon, and that sets our great country apart from all others, the fact that our government (local, state and federal) is a government "of the people, for the people, and by the people" and that it is the people who should decide by their votes what they want to see in their own communities.

Sincerely,

- Christian Omar Medina (Bishop Omar Medina)