

Opponent Testimony by Jeanna Kenney on Senate Bill 158  
Government Oversight Committee  
October 10th, 2023

Dear Ohio House Reps,

I am writing opposition written testimony on behalf of SB158. I am an organizer and leader with Building Freedom Ohio which is under the umbrella of Ohio Organizing Collaborative. I have been doing precinct organizing in my community getting to know my neighbors and discussing their support of our Cleveland initiative Issue 38 and their issues within our neighborhood.

As I've been organizing in my precinct, I've become more aware of the NEED for Participatory Budgeting here in Cleveland- as well as the need and benefits for it in other cities throughout Ohio. Many citizens I've spoken to are in complete support of allowing the people to decide where OUR hard earned tax dollars are disturbed. So many neighbors here in Cleveland aren't as invested in as others. We have ongoing issues with street repairs, street light repairs, out dated play areas for our children, over growing trees cutting into utility wires, and many, many, many more issues.

With Participatory Budget, I believe it gives ALL communities a chance to thrive. The residents within these communities are more so aware of the issues than most of our own city council elected officials. Together we can come together in civic engagement to work together to ensure our neighborhoods are not going without.

2% of ANY budget is not an absurd amount to ask for. As much money that's continuously dumped into unnecessary projects that truly do NOT benefit the residents of my city, we the citizens deserve to have say in where OUR money should go. It's been proven many of times that people in power take advantage of tax dollars and used the money towards their own agendas which clearly aren't benefiting the residents in their wards.

SB158 is another DIRECT attack on the people and our right to democracy. For far too long those in power positions have PROVEN that this state is NOT for the people. We must do better. As elected officials, the people's concerns should weigh above and beyond any personal interest within ones self. This legislation is NOT in the best interest of the residents of Ohio and I'm kindly asking you to please VOTE NO ON SB 158.

We the people deserve to live in communities that we love to reside in. Where issues are taken care of in a timely fashion. Communities that benefit all those who live within. We deserve better streets, sidewalks, park and access to food and transportation no matter which neighborhood we live in. This PB will allow the communities most suffering an obligation to become a better community. Again, on behalf of so many residents in Cleveland- I am hear to uplift their voices and strongly encourage you not to allow this attack on our rights topass with so many who support the idea and believe this could be the hope Clevelanders have had in making our city a better place to live!!!!

Thank you for listening,  
Jeanna Kenney  
Advocacy Chair Member- Building Freedom Ohio