

Chair Michael Rulli (R)

Vice Chair Kirk Schuring (R)

Ranking Member Bill DeMora (D)

Members of the Senate General Government Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Kate Makra. I am the Executive Director of Cleveland Right to Life and a Board Member of the Right to Life Action Coalition of Ohio, and I am here today to testify in support of SJR 2, also known as the Ohio Constitution Protection Amendment.

I am not being hyperbolic when I say that lives are at stake if Ohio's constitution is not protected before the November 2023 election. With pro-abortion groups advancing in their efforts to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot that would enshrine abortion at all stages, tens of thousands of babies in Ohio will be slaughtered each year if this extreme amendment is passed. Parents' rights will be obliterated: moms and dads would not be notified—let alone be able to consent-- to their underage daughters undergoing abortion procedures. This also opens the door for adolescents to pursue controversial sex change surgeries, puberty blockers or sterilization procedures: all without their parents' knowledge or consent.

As it currently stands, this radical amendment would require only a simple majority of votes to pass to become a permanent part of our Constitution. This is not right.

It should not be easier to amend our state Constitution than it is to pass the same law by going through the legislative process. Ohioans vote on their representatives every two years and their senators every four years. So, if they do not approve of the job their representatives are doing, they can vote them out. Those who did not vote for and are morally opposed to an amendment making abortion a constitutional right do not have the same remedy.

A 2/3 supermajority is already required to pass changes to appropriation limitations, override vetoes, pass emergency clauses, or put a constitutional amendment on the ballot. If issues such as these must win a supermajority for passage, so too should petition-based constitutional amendments.

Additionally, if a supermajority is not required to pass a petition-based constitutional amendment, there is little motivation to build a consensus among the people: what would be the point of trying to change hearts and minds on issues such as abortion and parental rights—issues that would have a monumental impact on Ohioans—if you only need 50% plus one to pass it?

Our constitution is currently up for sale to the highest bidder: out-of-state special interest groups can pour millions of dollars into easily securing amendments that would supersede the law: law established by the will of the people of Ohio through their elected representatives.

The passage of SJR 2 is necessary to protect the integrity of the Ohio Constitution.

I urge you to vote in favor of SJR 2. Thank you.