



Center FOR Christian Virtue

Public Policy. Engagement. Education.

To: Chair Michael Rulli
Vice Chair Kirk Schuring
Ranking Member Bill DeMora
Senate General Government Committee

March 29, 2023

Re: Support for SJR 2

Chair Rulli, Vice Chair Schuring, Ranking Member DeMora, and members of the Senate General Government Committee,

My name is Nilani Jawahar and I am here on behalf of the Center for Christian Virtue, Ohio's largest Christian public policy organization, to testify in support of Senate Joint Resolution 2, also known as the Constitution Protection Amendment, which would raise the threshold to amend the Ohio Constitution to 60% of the vote.

As a non-profit organization that has led a successful initiative to amend Ohio's Constitution back in 2004, and received 61.7% of the vote in order to do so, we believe that the provision required by this constitutional amendment is neither onerous nor unreasonable.

The Ohio Constitution is the most consequential document in our state. It is a foundational document that secures rights and freedoms for all Ohioans today and tomorrow. This is why it is reasonable and proper to raise the threshold to alter it, and make it more difficult for out-of-state special interest groups to buy amendments.

An example of this was with the Issue 1 ballot initiative in 2018 regarding penalties for low-level drug offenses. Petitioners raised \$9.8 million and \$1.4 million in non-monetary contributions. Nearly \$6 million of that came from out-of-state non-profits, including Chan Zuckerberg Advocacy and the Tides Center. This means that more than half the money to fund the initiative to reduce prison sentences for drug offenders in Ohio came from outside Ohio.

Sadly, this is not the worst way our constitution can be defiled. As we speak, pro-abortion groups are obtaining signatures to put a constitutional amendment on the



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ballot this November which would create a constitutional right to harm children in the womb. Tens of thousands of babies will be murdered each year if passed. Parental rights will be disregarded in protecting teenage girls from abortion procedures, and the state will not be permitted to enact any health and safety standards to protect mothers. Ohio must stop this extreme amendment from defiling our constitution.

The Ohio Constitution is not for sale, and a simple majority should not be enough to alter our foundational charter. SJR 2 strikes the important balance of protecting the integrity of this document, while maintaining the ability of Ohio citizens to directly engage in the policy-making process. For this reason I urge your support of SJR 2. Thank you, Chairman and committee for allowing me to testify, and I am happy to answer any questions.

The Center for Christian Virtue (CCV) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that endeavors to create an Ohio where God's blessings of life, family, and religious freedom are treasured, respected, and protected. www.ccv.org -- (513) 733-5775