



## GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 04/17/2023

Name: Rev Joan VanBecelaere

Address: 7430 Grand Bahama Dr, Columbus OH 43085

Telephone: 303-641-5896

Organization Representing: Ohio Votr Rights Coalition and Unitarian Universalist Justice Ohio

Testifying on Bill Number: SJR2

Testimony:  Verbal  Written  Both

Testifying As:  Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist?  Yes  No

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

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4/17/2023

Rev Joan VanBecelaere

Columbus, Ohio

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

I would like to voice my opposition to the bill SJR 2. I believe we need to preserve our time-honored Ohio democratic institution of the Voter Ballot Initiative process rather than work to destroy it. I am opposed to anything that makes it harder for voters to directly engage in our democracy by amending the Ohio Constitution when the people's need arises.

Normally, I would ask you to consider why you might want to make it more difficult for voters to engage in our state's democratic process. Over the past many decades, we have not seen any serious problems or acts of corruption connected to our Voter Initiative process. The process as it stands now works.

So why would you want to make the great and expensive effort to block this process, even going so far as to try to ignore the ban on expensive August elections that you all recently put in place?

Unfortunately, we already know why some of you want to make it more difficult for voters to engage in the Ballot Initiative process. Rep. Brian Stewart or Ashville already told us in a letter that it was necessary to make the Ballot Initiative process more difficult to protect "decades of Republicans' work" to make sure that reproductive rights are no longer honored in Ohio.

We also know from Rep. Stewart's letter that there is fear that the people will propose a more tightly worded and effective anti-gerrymandering amendment to assure fair representation in the Ohio Statehouse as well as the U.S. House of Representatives.

In short, the voters can see that SJR 2 is an attempt to maintain political power and control in Ohio despite the concerns and wishes of the people of Ohio. Please show the voters that you truly care about hearing their voices. Please stop SJR 2.