

SJR 2

Anisa Liban

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Opponent Testimony

Good morning Chairman Rulli and Members of the Senate General Government Committee, my name is Anisa Liban and I serve as the Government Affairs Director at CAIR-Ohio. The Council on American Islamic Relations is the largest Muslim Civils Rights organization in the nation -- Its Ohio Chapter serves thousands of Ohioans in Central Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland.

I am here today in opposition of Senate Joint Resolution 2 and to urge members of the committee to prioritize the people of Ohio who have vocalized their concerns with this unpopular and unnecessary proposal.

For over 111 years, Ohioans have resided in this great state with the freedom to mobilize and petition for amendments to the Ohio constitution.

This proposal would not only overturn a century-old right, but would directly impact residents like me who work hard to engage and educate disenfranchised minority communities on a wide-range of topics, including voter education and know-your-rights resources.

This resolution is honestly terrifying and negatively impacts Ohioans' access to direct democracy and dismisses the voices of countless residents whose votes will not be considered as a result of this minority-rule mindset.

If an amendment is going to apply to **every Ohioan**, I believe then every community should have a say in putting that potential constitution amendment on the ballot.

Do the votes of Ohio's most marginalized communities not matter?

- What message are we sending to Ohioans who are eager to have their voices heard on important issues?
- What message are we sending to immigrants & refugees, who left their homes in pursuit of a just democracy?

- What message are we sending to youth & minorities whose participation in the 2018 elections led to the highest midterm turnout in four decades- [according to the United States Census Bureau](#)

Supporters of this resolution will tell you this resolution prevents special-interest efforts from corruption and that citizen-led ballot measures are overused to push specific agendas; but rest assured Citizen-led ballot measures aren't overused. In fact, Ohio hasn't had a citizen-led ballot since 2018.

With that, I strongly urge the committee to consider the negative impact SJR2 will have not only on voters, but on all citizen-led efforts. The resolution is harmful to democracy and I believe it is unnecessary to make the process more complicated and it's unfair to voters.

SOURCE:

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/04/behind-2018-united-states-midterm-election-turnout.html>