Dear Senators, Representatives and Governor DeWine:

Ohioans voted down Issue 1 of August, 2023 because they understood it was an attack on our access to the ballot. We reject SB 153 and HB 233 as part of the same illegitimate attempt by the legislature to wrest power from the people. We say no!

Our undersigned organizations stand united in opposition to the proposed attacks on the petition process that are part of Senate Bill 153 and House Bill 223. These companion bills would enact massive and deeply harmful barriers to the democratic process in Ohio, not just by making it harder for eligible citizens to vote, but by attacking our treasured right to direct democracy. These bills put targets on the backs of civically engaged Ohioans.

Here are a few of the ways SB153/HB233 would attack the initiative process:

- Requiring more signatures be thrown out when there are minor clerical errors or corrections

- Changing the rules so that new and updated voter registrations need to have been filed prior to the date the petition is signed rather than by the date the petition is filed

- Forcing volunteer circulators to waive their rights – potentially subjecting them to politically motivated investigations

- Requiring “compensated” circulators to wear badges, and defines “compensated” so broadly it even applies to volunteers who receive free pizza or a t-shirt at campaign events

In total, the changes put forward in SB153/HB233 would create an atmosphere of intimidation and threats that would cast a pall on Ohio’s tradition of direct democracy that has been so judiciously used since it was adopted over 110 years ago. The bills would also impose massive unfunded mandates on our already overworked Boards of Elections by making the petition review process more complicated and burdensome.

From candidates qualifying for the ballot and localities making zoning changes to statewide constitutional amendments, petition gathering has been a cornerstone of Ohio's democracy. We urge you to abandon this newest effort to undercut the citizen-led democratic process.

Our organizations stand firm in support of Ohioans rights to the ballot. We hope members of the General Assembly join us in supporting this right, and abandon SB 153 and HB 233.

Signed by the following organizations:

A. Philip Randolph Institute of Ohio
Abortion Forward
ACLU OH
AFSCME Ohio Council 8
All on the Line
All Voting is Local Action
Black Environmental Leaders Association
Black Lives Matter Cleveland Inc.
Bold New Democracy
Cincinnati 50501
Cleveland Jobs with Justice
Cleveland VOTES
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Ohio
Coffee. Compassion. Action!
Columbus Community Bill of Rights
Columbus Community Rights Coalition, Inc
Columbus Education Justice Coalition
Common Cause Ohio
Communications Workers of America District 4
Communities United For Action
Community Organizing Center
Crooked River Action
Cuyahoga County Progressive Caucus
Doctors Organized for Health Care Solutions
EAGER Community LLC
Equality Ohio
Erase the Space
Fair Districts Ohio
Fairfield County Indivisible
Faith in Public Life
Firelands Indivisible
Fostering Hope Ohio
Freedom BLOC
Gahanna Democrats and Friends
Grandview Ignite
Green and Spiegel Midwest
Hamilton County Democratic Party
HEAL Ohio
Heartbeat Movement Inc
Heartland Conference
Honesty for Ohio Education
Ignite Peace
Indivisible Akron
Indivisible Central Ohio
Indivisible Central Ohio East
Indivisible Central Ohio subgroup - Thursday Action Group
Indivisible Southwest OH
Ironworkers Local 207
Ironworkers Local 44
IRTF Cleveland
Kent Environmental Council
LatinOHs
LEAD Ohio
League of Women Voters Cincinnati Area
League of Women Voters of Bowling Green
League of Women Voters of Lorain County
League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Columbus
League of Women Voters of Ohio
League of Women Voters of the Akron Area
League of Women Voters of the Greater Dayton Area
League of Women Voters of Toledo/Lucas County
Libertarian Party of Ohio
LOVEboldly
Medina County Democratic Party

Medina County Indivisible
Medina Democratic Club
Mill Creek Democracy Network
Mobilize the Vote NEO
Move to Amend Miami County, Ohio
National Association of Social Workers, Ohio Chapter
North Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Northeast Ohio Voter Advocates
OAPSE
OCBCP Ohio Unity Coalition
OCSEA AFSCME Local 11
Ohio AFL-CIO
Ohio Alliance for Retired Americans Educational Fund
Ohio Citizen Action
Ohio Coalition To End Qualified Immunity @ HeartbeatMovement Incorporated
Ohio Conference AAUP
Ohio Conference NAACP
Ohio Council of Churches
Ohio Education Association
Ohio Environmental Council Action Fund
Ohio Equal Rights
Ohio Fair Courts Alliance
Ohio Families Unite Against Police Brutality
Ohio Families Unite for Political Action and Change
Ohio Federation of Teachers
Ohio NOW Education and Legal Fund
Ohio Nurses Association
Ohio Progressive Action Leaders
Ohio Sisters Justice Network
Ohio Unity Coalition (OCBCP)
Ohio Voter Fund
Ohio Voter Rights Coalition
Ohio Women's Alliance
Ohio Working Families Party
Ohioans Against Extremism
OPAWL - Building AAPI Feminist Leadership
OPEIU Local 792
Orange Teachers Association
Organize! Ohio
Planned Parenthood Advocates of Ohio
Policy Matters Ohio
Positively Blue
ProgressNEO
Rank The Vote Ohio
Red Wine & Blue
ReSisters of Central Ohio
SEIU District 1199 WV/KY/OH
Sierra Club Ohio Chapter
Sisters of Mercy in Ohio
Southeast Progressives of Franklin County
St. John's UCC Columbus
Stonewall Democrats of Central Ohio
Summit County Progressive Democrats
Terrace Park Democratic Club
Terrace Park Democratic Club
Third Act Ohio
Thrive at Life: Working Solutions
TransOhio
UAW
UFCW Local 1059
UFCW Local 75
United Church of Christ
United Steelworkers-District 1
Upper Arlington Progressive Action
Ursuline Sisters of Cincinnati
Vegetarians of the Greater Youngstown Area
Voting-Matters
We Are Ohio
Westerville Progressive Alliance
Woman's City Club of Greater Cincinnati