

HJR 19 - 2nd Draft - Testimony for 12/11/18

Tuesday, 12/11, 1pm in room 116 at the Statehouse.

Rep29@ohiohouse.gov

GovernmentAccountability&OversightCommittee@ohiohouse.gov.

I stand before you to protest any thoughts you may have of a yes vote on HJR 19. NO is the people's choice.

It's hard to imagine that I could tell you anything that you haven't already heard about this proposal. What you're attempting is to strip a right that Ohioans have enjoyed that puts us ahead of many other states in terms of direct democracy. You are favoring corporations that are okay with polluting the environment and exploiting labor for poverty wages for short-term profit despite long-term damage. Haven't Ohioans sustained enough damage already with pockets of 30% poverty across the state, the opioid crisis and the health of Ohioans ranking 46th in the country? If our representatives cannot agree on how to solve these several problems, the people must cling to and exercise their right to direct democracy and override the statehouse.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Do you think 30% poverty in urban neighborhoods is justice? It is spilling into the suburbs. Do you think 30% poverty in remote, rural areas is justice? It is causing despair and death that damage families and our state's economy. Poverty obliterates hope. It does not vote or even votes against the best candidate for the times.

I spent countless hours in 2017 along with others across the state collecting signatures to end gerrymandering. That was a great experience in direct democracy. Most people I asked signed the petition. Many of them thanked me for spending my time and effort. Still others, although in a hurry, were willing to wait for a person signing to take their turn to sign it. Issue 1 passed in May with a 75% margin. People want just elections. Representatives in this house have been stacking the deck and we worked to fix that.

John F Kennedy said: "Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable."

Do you think it is for the greater good that you pass HJR 19? I don't.

Do you think this bill makes peaceful revolution possible or will it be a step toward deeper poverty or increasing violence?

Proponents claim the objective is to get outside money out of Ohio's Constitutional Amendment process. Several editorials have said it does exactly the opposite. It isn't

hard to see that the bill excludes volunteers by restricting time for signature collection and placing it in cold months rather allowing it though the summer. That means more fundraising to pay collectors. What does that tell you? I says to me that money is speech and the people don't have the money that corporations have.

John Adams said: "Government is instituted for the common good; for the protection, safety, prosperity and happiness of the people; and not for the profit, honor, or private interest of any one man, family, or class of men."

Do you think bowing to lobbyists meets that standard when so many people have come before you to say this is a bad idea?

I will remind you that only 23% of the proposed amendments have passed. That's not a lot of change to be afraid of, yet, recently, the people made a blunder by passing an amendment to restrict our options on shaping healthcare law. Given the rising support for universal, single payer healthcare, and the need the people have for it, do you really want to raise the bar so high that we cannot have it without 60% supporting it? Don't you think the bar is high enough when you factor in the tens of millions of dollars the industry will likely pour in to squelch the deal? Be certain you are not setting a trap for yourselves on this issue.

If you want to improve the ballot initiative process, you could revisit suggestions made by the constitution commission including the 5 year safe harbor with the ability to amend with 2/3s majority in both Ohio House and Senate.

Let HJR 19 die right here.

Sincerely,

William N. Davis, II
7231 Hardwicke Pl
Dayton, OH 45414
937-264-0377