

My name is Barbara Kaplan. I am a retired teacher from Peninsula, Ohio. I am a member of the League of Women Voters and Crooked River Action, a local good government group, based in Cuyahoga Falls.

I am strongly opposed to altering Ohio citizen's right to initiate change in our constitution as proposed. HJR 6 is an undemocratic proposal that should not even warrant discussion, One criticism of the process is that the process is too easy and that too many amendments make it on the ballot. Another is that "outside groups" are influencing our laws.

In recent memory I have circulated petitions for the Neighborhood Safety and Drug Rehabilitation amendment, a Background Check amendment and the Ohio State Redistricting Amendment. Each required **unpaid** volunteers to spend countless hours in the field collecting hundreds of thousands of signatures from voters. The first, promoted by the Ohio Organizing Collaborative, a state-wide non-profit organization, failed at the ballot box. The second was promoted by Ohioans for Gun Safety, a local grassroots group that eventually folded. The amendment never made it on the ballot. The third, led by Ohio Common Cause and the League of Women Voters, was passed overwhelmingly by the citizens of Ohio. None of these were "outside" interest groups. All were driven by citizens like myself committed to making Ohio and Ohio laws better for all. I can tell you that the field work was not easy. It required dedication, stamina and a lot of time. This is how democracy should work. Ideas percolate up, the good ones are accepted and the bad ones are left to die.

HJR 6 is an attempt by leadership to silence these voices by raising the bar and would allow a 41% minority of the voters of Ohio to silence the other 59%. It's the very definition of tyranny. Ohio got it right in 1912 when it instituted citizen-led constitutional change. I ask that it be left that way.