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Fw: Stewart's HJR1 is a slap in voter's faces

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Column below was published in Circleville Herald this past Saturday
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Stewart's HJR1 is a slap in voter's faces

Representative Brian Stewart (R-Ashville) is not being honest when he and his fellow Republican legislators claim they want to protect Ohio's Constitution from corporate and bankrolled special interests with HJR1 and associated bills. The real issue is they want to cheat you out of your voice by changing the rules in the middle of the game as they fear pro-choice amendment/language would likely pass in a November election.

No matter how many times Stewart denies that stifling pro-choice and fair re-districting (anti-gerrymandering) issues are his motivation, the truth is he simply not being honest. Stewart circulated written communications to his fellow Ohio legislature Republicans noting that we must stifle the voice of you, of Ohio citizens, with HJR1 to prevent pro-choice and fair districts amendments from passing by severely limiting the time period that signatures can be collected, eliminating the time period during which additional signatures can be collected if some of the original signatures are ruled invalid, increase the counties that must submit signatures from 44 to 88 and worst of all, requiring that 60% of voters must vote in favor of an amendment to pass. The threshold for passing amendments to the Ohio constitution has been 50% for well over a hundred years. Stewart and Ohio Republican legislators became aware last November that pro-choice amendments/ less abortion restrictive language were passed in California, Michigan, Vermont, Kentucky and Montana by 52-57% of voters. Thus Stewart's push for HJR1, and its' predecessors began

Do you doubt that I am being truthful by calling Stewart's honesty into question? Do you doubt that Stewart is telling you he is protecting the Constitution while telling his Republican cronies differently, that HJR1 is about strangling pro-choice and fair re-districting? Review minutes of the House Constitutional Resolutions Committee when Rep. Bride Rose Sweeney (D-Westlake) embarrassed Stewart by holding up copies of his written memorandum.

It gets far worse. Senate President Matt Huffman (R-Lima) wants to place Stewart's HJRI on an August ballot--timed to gut a November pro-choice amendment. About 10% , if that many, of Ohioans vote in August special elections, thus 5%, or less, of Ohio voters could shut down the voices of up to 60% of us voting pro-choice in November. In fact, HJR1 would allow a 41% minority to overrule a majority permanently. Republican hypocrisy abounds. Republicans passed HB 458 four months ago to eliminate August elections. Huffman has said he is willing to waste \$20 million of our taxpayer dollars on an August election just to pass HJR1. \$20 million to silence your vote.

For further reading I refer to two recent Columbus Dispatch editorials " Our view: Desperate Ohio lawmakers ready to slap voters in the face to stop abortion vote" (Dispatch Editorial Board) and Thomas Suddes' "Power Hungry LaRose, Huffman think you are stupid or have amnesia". I quote from the first "That some Republicans in the Statehouse would push so hard to change how the state amends the constitution forcing a vote during a low-turnout August election months after the same lawmakers voted that such elections should be limited slaps voters in the face and betrays our democracy."

Brad W. Cotton