

April 17, 2022

OH HJR 1

Opponent Testimony

House Constitutional Resolutions Committee

Celine Rajoulh, Medical Student

Dear Chair Phil Plummer, Vice Chair Brett Hillyer, Ranking Member Ismail Mohamed, and Members of the House Constitutional Resolutions Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. My name is Celine Rajoulh, and I am a first-year medical student at the Case Western Reserve University **testifying in strong opposition to House Joint Resolution 1, the Constitutional Amendment to Require a 60% vote to approve any constitutional amendment.** Our testimony is strictly our own and does not represent any entity or organization in the State of Ohio.

I speak as a child of immigrants— individuals who were drawn to this country for the promise of democracy, and a government that stands to represent the will of the people. Ohioans have a long and rich history of making their voices heard, from the Rebellion of 1820 to the Civil Rights Movement. Our very constitution begins with “We, the people.” Who are you, as **elected** officials of the Ohio constituency, to deny the very voice that gives you your positions? Our government serves as an extension of the people, and it must ensure that the people’s voices are heard on issues relevant to them.

At the end of the day, the way people are heard in our democracy is by voting. Our historical precedent has always been that a simple majority represents the will of the people. It is enough to pass bills in the house and it is enough to elect our representatives all the way up to our president. Why, then, is it not enough for issues so pivotal to the people that we directly vote on them in the ballot? Passing this bill impedes on the rights of our citizens to state what the problems are AND their ability to pass a vote on them. This is, plain and simple, an attack on democracy in the great state of Ohio.

To conclude, I leave you with the words of one of our founding fathers: “If a faction consists of less than a majority, relief is supplied by the republican principle, which enables the majority to defeat its sinister views by regular vote. It may clog the administration, it may convulse the society; but it will be unable to execute and mask its violence under the forms of the Constitution.” We ask that you uphold the pillars of our democracy that make our country a beacon of hope for those who are not privileged to access it.

