

Good morning,

I am Sister Gemma Doll, a Dominican Sister of Peace. I live in Columbus, Ohio.

My Catholic faith compels me to take my responsibility to participate in political life very seriously, and to defend that right for all citizens for the good of our community. The right of people to participate in the political process is enshrined in the US Constitution, where we are described as a nation of the People, by the People, and for the People.

HJR 1 is a legislative attempt to undermine the voice of the People by setting an unreasonably high bar for ballot initiatives. In today's environment of political virtue signaling and public political theatre, a ballot issue can be the only way Ohio citizens can make their voices heard.

The 60% level for ballot initiatives proposed by HJR1 is both burdensome and unnecessarily restrictive. Why would political leaders like yourselves want to deafen yourselves to the concerns and issues voiced by the citizens you say that you represent?

Ohio is blessed with a diverse, multi-cultural, and inter-faith citizenry. To show true respect for those citizens, and to allow each citizen to fully exercise their rights in our democracy, each of YOU, as elected representatives of your fellow citizens, must not just SAY that every human person is made in the image of God, but act on that belief, ensuring that every individual has a right to be heard. Both our faith and our constitution say that each citizen and each vote has value.

As a consecrated religious, I want to believe that each of you strive to build the Beloved Community envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King.

But our democracy is threatened by distrust of our legislators, and sadly, HJR1, which is yet another attempt to stifle the will and the voice of Ohio's citizens, proves that distrust to be well-founded.

ONLY when citizens are confident that their voices are heard and truly matter will citizens again trust their political leaders. ONLY when legislative processes in Ohio again function to serve the People as opposed to elected officials grasping at power will those elected officials regain the trust and respect of the electorate.

Today, we stand at a significant inflection point.

Shall we nurture a nation more united? Or shall we succumb to fear of each other and division in our community, encouraged by legislation like HJR 1 which devalues the voice and the vote of Ohio's citizens.

I urge you to reject HJR 1 and hold the vision of a society where every person counts.

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