

In Opposition to Ohio bills HJR1 & SJR2

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed members of the Ohio legislature,

I testify before you today to express my fervent opposition to Ohio House Joint Resolution 1 (HJR1) and Senate Joint Resolution 2 (SJR2), which, if passed, would significantly undermine the democratic foundation of our great state. These resolutions not only impose unfair restrictions on ballot initiatives, but they also manipulate the electoral process by scheduling these changes for a special August election, when voter turnout is historically low.

HJR1 and SJR2 propose to require a 60% "YES" vote for the passage of a constitutional amendment, effectively raising the barrier for amending our constitution. Our founding fathers recognized the importance of flexibility in governance, as evidenced by Thomas Jefferson's statement, "Laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind." This progress is stifled when citizens face unnecessary hurdles in addressing issues of importance.

Moreover, HJR1 seeks to mandate the collection of signatures from all 88 Ohio counties, making it even more difficult for citizens to bring forth ballot initiatives. This requirement would disproportionately affect grassroots movements, which often lack the resources to mobilize across the state. The proposed elimination of the "cure period" would further impede the democratic process, as campaigns would no longer have the opportunity to correct signature shortfalls. As President Ronald Reagan once said, "Government's first duty is to protect the people, not run their lives." By removing the cure period, the state government would be effectively dictating which issues deserve a voice, thereby eroding the very principles upon which our democracy was founded.

The decision to hold a special August election only adds insult to injury. With traditionally low voter turnout, such a decision undermines the will of the people and dilutes the democratic process. As President Abraham Lincoln so eloquently stated, our government should be "of the people, by the people, and for the people." By proposing these changes during a period of low voter engagement, the Ohio legislature is subverting the democratic process and disregarding the desires of its citizens.

I implore the members of the Ohio legislature to consider the legacy of our founding fathers and the conservative principles that have shaped this great nation. In the words of John Adams, "The only maxim of a free government ought to be to trust no man living with power to endanger the public liberty." With the passage of HJR1 and SJR2, we risk jeopardizing the very fabric of our democracy, placing undue power in the hands of a few and silencing the voices of many.

As citizens of this great state, we have a responsibility to protect and uphold the democratic ideals that have guided us for centuries. I urge the members of this legislature to reject Ohio HJR1 and SJR2, as they are unfair, unpopular, undemocratic, and unnecessary. In doing so, we can honor the wisdom of our founding fathers and preserve the democratic rights and liberties that make our nation exceptional.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

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