

Chairperson Plummer, Vice-Chair Hillyer, Ranking Member Mohamed and members of the Constitutional Resolutions Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to submit opponent testimony on HJR1.

This proposed resolution threatens majority rule and the premise of "one person, one vote" in Ohio. When I line up to vote, I am of the belief that my vote counts just as much as the people lined up next to me. But if this resolution were to pass out of this committee, it would completely nullify that belief. For much of our country's history, we have operated under the faith that the majority should rule. But as much as the founders of this country believed in the power of the majority, they did not get to that notion overnight. Under the Articles of Confederation, the founders were confronted with the sheer ineffectiveness that arose from strict imposed supermajority requirements. They saw how dangerous it was when nothing important or substantive could get done when a minority was able to completely derail the majority. As Andrew Hamilton put it in The Federalist Papers No.22 "...what at first sight may seem a remedy, is, in reality, a poison. To give a minority a negative upon the majority (which is always the case where more than a majority is requisite to a decision), is, in its tendency, to subject the sense of the greater number to that of the lesser.". That is what I fear would happen in Ohio if this legislative body were to allow this resolution to pass. It would be undemocratic for a minority of 41% of unpopular view holders to have the power to block the actual state-wide popular view that a citizen-led ballot initiative might offer.

Proponents of this resolution also argue that HJR1 is necessary to protect our constitution from corrupt forces and "out of state special interests". And as noble as that may sound, I maintain that taking such severe and permanent action by profusely altering our state constitution is unnecessary. This is because Ohioans already had the intellect to protect our constitution from these looming threats. Through our purview as voters in 2015, we saw fit to pass and enact The Ohio Initiated Monopolies Amendment into our constitution, thus protecting our state from powerful special interests, wealthy lobbyists, and monopolies. This serves as an example in a long history of Ohioans appropriately using our right of citizen-led ballot initiatives to safeguard our constitution and freedoms.

Passing this resolution would also be unfair to Ohioans. After enjoying 110 years of direct democracy, this body would seek to restrict our ability to take our ideas to the ballot box by making it unnecessarily difficult and stricter to use our right by making harder the already herculean task of signature gathering by requiring signatures from all 88 counties, and also by removing the

opportunity to cure any contested signatures. All while increasing the threshold needed to get initiatives passed to an undemocratic 60%. I believe that this could all but guarantee that the only groups who would be able to meet the burden of the process, that this resolution demands, would be wealthy, well-connected individuals or special interest groups. And that goes against the very essence of democracy that Ohioans voted on and have practiced since the 1912 constitutional convention that helped modernize and further democratize our state. In fact it was during that same convention, that took place here in Columbus, where Teddy Roosevelt himself personally reflected on his ardent support for the citizen led initiative process where he said and I quote "In actual practice it has been found in very many states that legislative bodies have not been responsive to the popular will. Therefore, I believe that the state should provide for the possibility of direct popular action in order to make good on such legislative failure" unquote.

So please, do not dampen our voices. I believe in the robust and fair representative democracy that this committee and General assembly should be a part of. But I also believe that as individual voters we also have a right to a fair and reliable direct democracy process as well. And as Ohio voters, we have shown that we know how to think for ourselves and that we know how to singularly act in the best interest of our state. But we can only hold on to that freedom if this committee decides not to inappropriately alter a right that we have held for over one hundred years. Thank you.