

April 25, 2023

To: The Chair and the Committee

From: Anne M. Houdek, Burton Ohio

I appreciate the opportunity to present written opponent testimony regarding Senate Bill 92 and House Bill 144 to the chair and the committee.

I urge you to vote NO on Senate Bill 92 and House Bill 144, which if passed, would resurrect the special August elections. It is painfully obvious the reason these bills exist is that they are an attempt by our legislature to stop the reproductive freedom initiative from passing in November.

If SB92 and HB144 are passed, the special August election will have on the ballot requirements to change initiative petition procedures regarding amendments to Ohio's Constitution. In a nutshell, both SJR2 and HJR1 increase the requirement for passage of a constitutional amendment from 50% plus one to 60%, effective immediately. There are other requirements as well. The 50% plus one vote has been the law for over 100 years. Why change it now?

The fact that August special elections are even being considered is absurd, considering the same legislature passed a law to eliminate August elections a few months ago as being too costly. Our taxpayer money can be better spent.

So, what changed between then and now? This. The ballot language for reproductive freedom was approved and a citizens-led petition initiative to put reproductive freedom on the November ballot is well under way. And the supermajority, gerrymandered Republican legislature refuses to listen to Ohio's citizens and allow pregnant women to receive safe, compassionate, proper care and their doctors to provide that care. Talk about government overreach. Thus, the initiative.

It's painfully obvious to all Ohio voters that the ONLY REASON SB92 and HB 144 are being considered is so the reproductive freedom amendment on November's ballot would need 60% voter approval instead of the current 50% plus 1. Four bipartisan Ohio governors are against this threshold.

The effect will be the equivalent of changing horses in midstream, moving the goal posts in the middle of the game—choose your phrase. Passage of SB92 and HB144 is patently unfair, un-American, unpopular and un-Democratic and completely unnecessary. Vote NO on both.