

Opponent Testimony by Elaine Schleiffer on Senate Bill 158
Government Oversight Committee
October 10th, 2023

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to present opponent testimony on SB 158. My name is Elaine Schleiffer and I am writing to oppose the passage of Senate Bill 158.

Cleveland voters deserve their right to vote on Issue 38 in November. Just like Clevelanders, voters in every municipality in Ohio deserve the opportunity to vote on local, citizen-led ballot initiatives. SB 158 infringes on that right.

Ohio's home rule principle is foundational to how we manage our communities and our relationship with the state, and the broader idea is that local communities understand their own needs best. Local communities are best able to respond to local needs, and to create local strategies for addressing local health, safety, and economic growth.

SB 158 declares that the state knows what we need better than our community does. SB 158 says that the state knows best what programs we need, how we should spend our money, and the lives our families should live. SB 158 says that the Ohio Statehouse is best equipped to solve for Cleveland's longstanding lack of voter engagement and longstanding lack of basic services.

Civil rights organizer Marian Wright Edelman said "democracy is not a spectator sport," and for too long state-level leaders have forced Ohio's communities to look on as decisions are made about our lives, our families, our health and safety, our schools, our economic development by people who do not live in our communities and do not understand our needs.

I am not a spectator, and I intend to use the full breadth of my rights as a citizen of this democracy. I am disappointed and disgusted to be fighting with my democratically elected representatives on the issue of home rule.

Sincerely,
- Elaine Schleiffer