

	<p>GENERAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE</p>
	<p>Witness Form</p>

Today's Date April 17, 2023

Name:

Beth Schaeffer

Address:

134 Patterson Road.

Dakwood, OH 45419

Telephone: 937-245-0976

Organization Representing:

Individual Citizen Testifying on Bill Number:

S.J.R. No. 2

Testimony: \_\_\_\_\_ Verbal  Written \_\_\_\_\_ Both Testifying As: \_\_\_\_\_

Proponent \_\_\_\_\_  Opponent \_\_\_\_\_ Interested Party Are you a Registered Lobbyist?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  No

Special Requests:

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Written testimony is a public record and may be posted on the Ohio Senate's website

# WITNESS INFORMATION FORM

Please complete the Witness Information Form before testifying:

Date: April 17, 2023

Name: Beth Schaeffer

Are you representing: Yourself  Organization

Organization (If Applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: 134 Patterson Road

City: Oakwood State: Ohio Zip: 45419

Best Contact Telephone: 937-245-0976 Email: bwschaeffer@gmail.com

Do you wish to be added to the committee notice email distribution list? Yes  No

Business before the committee

Legislation (Bill/Resolution Number): S.J.R. No 2

Specific Issue: proposed amendment reduces existng citizens rights

Are you testifying as a: Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Will you have a written statement, visual aids, or other material to distribute? Yes  No

(If yes, please send an electronic version of the documents, if possible, to the Chair's office prior to committee. You may also submit hard copies to the Chair's staff prior to committee.)

How much time will your testimony require? No Oral Testimony, Written Only

Please provide a brief statement on your position:

I am opposed SJ.R. No. 2 and any attempt to make it more difficult for voters to Amend the Ohio Constitution and limit the power of the people to actively and meaningfully participate in decision making that directly affects their lives.

*Please be advised that this form and any materials (written or otherwise) submitted or presented to this committee are records that may be requested by the public and may be published online.*

April 17, 2023

**Written Testimony in Opposition to proposed Senate Joint Resolution No. 2.**

S.J.R. No. 2 is yet another attempt by the Ohio Legislature to limit the power of the people to actively and meaningfully participate in decision making that directly impacts their lives. A pattern seems to be developing for legislators to suggest a remedy for a problem that does not exist to advance their own agenda.

Article II sec. 01 of the Ohio Constitution specifically reserves the power of THE PEOPLE to propose to the general assembly laws and amendments to the constitution, and to adopt or reject them at the polls on a referendum ... and independent of the General Assembly to propose amendments to the constitution and to adopt or reject the same at the polls.... Existing requirements for a citizen-initiated amendment to be placed on the ballot and passed have already proven effective in allowing citizens to raise and vote upon issues important to them when the Legislature has not been willing to act without producing an inordinate number of constitutional amendments. The claim that influence of unspecified "outside special interest" has led, or will lead, to an increase in voter-initiated amendments is unsubstantiated. Citizens themselves must lead these initiatives and voters will either approve or reject them. The fact is that the vast majority of constitutional amendments that have been passed were initiated by the Legislature. The Ohio Constitution is intended to protect the rights of its citizens and the elected officials are sworn to protect those rights, not limit or usurp those rights for themselves.

Raising the 60% required vote to pass a citizen-initiated Amendment is a direct attempt to unreasonably restrict the ability of Citizens to directly participate in the process of democracy. While also raising the required vote to pass a legislative-initiated amendment to 60% appears to establish equity, the reality is as a result of continued gerrymandering, the current Republican Super majority, can still continue to pass legislation to protect its power without being accountable to anyone other than its party core, while at the same time slowly eroding democracy by limiting meaningful participation by all citizens in their government. It is the fear that at some point a more perceptive and involved electorate could under the existing constitution decide that they no longer wish to be governed in this manner and that they will hold their representatives accountable that appears to be the underlying motivation for introduction of S.J.R No. 2.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Beth Schaeffer  
134 Patterson Rd.  
Oakwood, OH 45419