



OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



AS THE VOICE FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

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April 19, 2023

The Honorable Jason Stephens
77 S. High St., 14th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Speaker Stephens:

On behalf of the 120,000 members of the Ohio Education Association, this letter is to urge a “no” vote on House Joint Resolution 1 (HJR 1). Majority rule is a basic tenet of our democracy. However, HJR 1 seeks to weaken the voice of Ohio voters by making it much more challenging to pass citizen-led initiatives – requiring 60% of the vote rather than a simple majority to amend the Constitution.

For over 100 years, Ohioans could amend the Constitution through a citizen-led initiative. Utilizing direct democracy in this manner allows Ohio voters to address critical issues when the legislature is either unable or unwilling to do so.

Additionally, HJR 1 would make the arduous process of bringing a citizen-led initiative to the ballot even more difficult. The resolution would require gathering signatures of at least 5% of electors in every county instead of from 44 counties. The amendment would also eliminate the ten-day cure period to gather additional signatures.

The existing process is far from easy, requiring hundreds of thousands of signatures from across the state to qualify for the ballot. Furthermore, there is already a prohibition from special interests regarding using the Constitution to create a monopoly, business interest, or preferred tax status. HJR 1 aims to make it harder for the citizens of Ohio to have an influential voice and address issues that benefit the public interest.

In December of 2022, more than 600 delegates to the OEA Representative Assembly passed a new business item in opposition to House Joint Resolution 6. OEA is among a large, diverse, and continually growing list of organizations that have expressed opposition to this proposal.

Further, I would like to express OEA’s opposition to SB 92. This bill seeks to add an August special election for the purpose of rushing HJR 1 to the ballot. The argument during the previous General Assembly to eliminate August special elections was that these elections have low voter turning. Now, there seems to be a stunning reversal and a desire to hold an August election where the outcome could be a lasting alteration to the rights of all Ohioans.

The OEA will lead the way for continuous improvement of public education while advocating for members and the learners they serve.

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OEA

OHIO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

175 YEARS

AS THE **VOICE** FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL
EDUCATORS AND **STUDENTS**

Again, I urge a “no” vote on HJR 1 and proposals to rush it to the ballot. Given the importance of this issue, these will be scorecard votes for OEA. The voters of Ohio should be our ultimate decision-makers. Our elected officials need to listen when the majority speaks at the ballot box.

Sincerely,



Scott DiMauro
President

CC: Members of the Ohio House of Representatives

