



2023 August Election: Ohio Issue 1

Official Ballot Language:

Proposed Constitutional Amendment

ELEVATING THE STANDARDS TO QUALIFY FOR AN INITIATED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AND TO PASS A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Proposed by Joint Resolution of the General Assembly

To amend Sections 1b, 1e, and 1g of Article II and Sections 1 and 3 of Article XVI of the Constitution of the State of Ohio

A majority yes vote is necessary for the amendment to pass.

The proposed amendment would:

- Require that any proposed amendment to the Constitution of the State of Ohio receive the approval of at least 60 percent of eligible voters voting on the proposed amendment.
- Require that any initiative petition filed on or after January 1, 2024 with the Secretary of State proposing to amend the Constitution of the State of Ohio be signed by at least five percent of the electors of each county based on the total vote in the county for governor in the last preceding election.
- Specify that additional signatures may not be added to an initiative petition proposing to amend the Constitution of the State of Ohio that is filed with the Secretary of State on or after January 1, 2024 proposing to amend the Constitution of the State of Ohio.

If passed, the amendment will be effective immediately.

League Explanation of Issue 1

Issue 1, if approved by the voters, would amend the Ohio Constitution:

- to require all amendments to be approved by 60% of the votes.
- to alter the simple majority rule that has been in effect since 1912 and apply the new 60% passage rate to amendments proposed by citizen petitions, by the General Assembly and by constitutional conventions. This change becomes effective immediately and applies to any amendments that may be on the November 7, 2023 ballot.
- to change the signature requirements for petitions for citizen-initiated amendments, which currently must include signatures from at least 10% of the votes in the last governor’s election and 5% of the governor’s vote in 44 counties, to 10% of the votes in the last governor’s election and 5% of the governor’s vote in all 88 Ohio counties. This change in the number of counties does not become effective until 2024.
- to eliminate the 10-day “cure period” during which signatures on petitions for citizen-initiated amendments that are determined to be inadequate because of changes in addresses on the voting rolls or for other reasons may be updated. This elimination of the “cure period” becomes effective in 2024.

In Support of a YES vote:

- Protects the Ohio Constitution by making it harder to amend, thus making the Ohio Constitution more like the U.S. Constitution.
- Encourages a smaller state government by making it more difficult to raise funds through statewide bonds, which do not allow spending beyond the \$750,000 debt limit as mandated in the Ohio Constitution.
- Protects the Ohio Constitution from special interests by making it more difficult for amendments to win approval by requiring a supermajority of votes cast, rather than a simple majority.
- Expands the 5% signature requirement from voters in 44 counties to voters in every one of Ohio's 88 counties, thus preventing citizens proposing constitutional amendments from cherry picking where they gather signatures.
- Eliminates second bites at the apple by repealing the "cure period" for signatures submitted in support of proposed citizen-initiated amendments, beginning in 2024.
- Moves Ohio closer to the policy of 32 states that do not allow citizen-initiated constitutional amendments and matches Florida's 60% approval threshold for all constitutional amendments.

In Support of a NO vote:

- Ends the principle of majority rule, by permitting 40% of the voters to block Constitutional amendments.
- Reduces the ability of the state to raise funds for conservation, economic development, and technology projects through statewide bonds.
- Permits the voters of any county to have a virtual veto over citizen-led constitutional initiatives by requiring signatures from all 88 rather than 44 counties.
- Eliminates the "cure period" that gives citizen-led ballot initiative campaigns an additional ten days to secure signatures if they come up short.
- Makes the use of citizen initiatives to propose amendments to the Ohio Constitution prohibitively expensive and only available to a few well-funded special interest groups. Greatly increases the difficulty for Ohioans to use the initiative power when the Ohio government is unresponsive or corrupt.
- Is unnecessary, because Ohioans have used their initiative power judiciously, approving only 19 of 71 (about one-fourth) of proposed amendments over 111 years, and in 2015, Ohioans approved an amendment prohibiting businesses from using the initiative process to obtain any special benefit.

Your Vote = Your Voice!

Early Voting Starts July 11. Election Day is August 8

- To vote Early or on Election Day, bring an unexpired photo ID: Ohio BMV-issued Driver's License or State ID, US or Ohio issued military/veteran ID, or a passport.
- Confirm your polling location, as many have changed.
- To learn more, go to vote411.org or scan the QR code

