

Written Testimony on House Bill 1

May 29, 2024

By Kevin C. O'Neil

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Thomas, Ranking Member Humphrey, and members of the House Government Oversight Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony on proposed House Bill 1 (HB 1).

My name is Kevin C. O'Neil. I am a registered Ohio voter and have been for over 40-years.

I am strongly opposed to HB 1.

It is not legislation that is needed given the Democratic National Committee has resolved to nominate President Biden as its candidate in a manner that meets Ohio law, and HB 1 seriously restricts the Constitutional Rights of Ohio Citizens to bring and promote Ballot Initiatives and Referendums under Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Chapter 3519.

As an Ohio registered voter I am asking you to do the right thing and vote "No" on HB 1.

This body should not take any action that restricts in any way the Constitutional Rights of Ohio Citizens for Ballot Initiatives. The process protects the rights of all Ohio Citizens to propose and vote upon matters of importance to all Ohio Citizens where the Ohio Legislature has either not followed or has not taken action to address. This is evidenced by the recent Citizens Ballot Initiatives approved by the vast majority of Ohio residents in the past several years.

The Ballot Initiative process under ORC Chapter 3519 is already extremely complex and an extremely difficult for Citizens to implement requiring the collection of over 400,000 signatures of registered voters in a majority of the counties in Ohio. The cost to citizens of even one Ballot Initiative is in the millions of dollars. Adding more restrictions is not a corrective action, but one taken out of spite given the fact that the Ohio citizenship has passed by an overwhelming a majority Ballot Initiatives which the Republican Party has opposed.

Proposed restrictions in HB 1 on bans of funding by foreign sources already exist under current election law. Trying to apply that selectively to only Ohio Citizen Ballot Initiatives and not all like election processes shows the true intent behind HB 1. HB 1 likely violates the Constitutions of both Ohio and The United States. As such passing HB 1 will cost the State of Ohio and the citizens of the State of Ohio millions in legal fees and costs, and impact Ohio elections for years to come.

I ask you to consider my written testimony and vote "No" on HB 1.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.