

August 8 Ballot Issue Explainer

A constitutional amendment is on the ballot that would make it harder for citizens to change Ohio's constitution through ballot initiatives.

What's at Stake?

Since 1912, Ohio citizens have been able to amend the state's constitution through ballot initiatives. A simple majority of voters, anything over 50%, is required to pass an amendment once it gets on the ballot. With this August 8 ballot issue, Republican legislators are now seeking to change that, hoping to raise the simple majority to a super majority, requiring 60% approval for passage.

The new amendment (also called HJR 6 and State Issue 1) will also make it more difficult to get these initiatives on the ballot. Currently, getting on the ballot requires petition signatures amounting to at least 5% of the electors (recent voters) in half of Ohio's counties. If the measure passes, signatures will be required from at least 5% of the electors in all 88 of Ohio's counties.

History

The citizen amendment process was implemented in 1912. Since 1912, [71 amendments have been proposed by citizen initiative and appeared on the ballot](#); 19 passed with a simple majority. These include restrictions on smoking in places of employment, establishment of county home rule, prohibition of taxes on food, adoption of legislative term limits, and adoption of a constitutional minimum wage.

Abortion and Redistricting

The first issue that would be affected by this change is abortion. Abortion-rights supporters are currently gathering signatures for a November initiative that would add abortion rights to the Ohio constitution. If the August 8 ballot issue passes, this effort will become more difficult, and some legislators and abortion opponents are supporting the August 8 amendment as a way to combat abortion. The measure would also hamper proposed initiatives to limit gerrymandering, which gives one party disproportionate representation in the legislature and Congress.

Statements For

- "Ohio's proposal to increase the threshold to amend the state constitution will protect Ohioans from short-sighted partisan special interests and promote a stronger model for good governance.... if a proposal is not popular enough for 60% of Ohioans to support, it should not be enshrined in the state's constitution." – [Heritage Action](#).
- "After decades of Republicans' work to make Ohio a pro-life state, the Left intends to write abortion on demand into Ohio's constitution. If they succeed, all the work accomplished by multiple Republican majorities will be undone, and we will return to 19,000+ babies being aborted each and every year." – State Rep. [Brian Stewart](#), writing in support of HJR 6.
- "We need to create additional safeguards for Ohio's constitution so I think that it will be a great day for Ohio." – [Beth Vanderkool](#), executive director of the Greater Columbus Right to Life.
- "We must protect our Constitution from being bought and sold by out-of-state wealthy interests." – [Rob Sexton](#), lobbyist for the Buckeye Firearm Association.

Statements Against

- "I urge you...not to revive the August special election and...not to support a constitutional amendment to raise from a simple majority to 60% the voter approval threshold for amendments to the Ohio Constitution." – Former Republican Governor [Bob Taft](#).
- "Really what this is about is silencing the voice of voters and shutting down direct democracy. Because again, this is a legislature who has no interest in being checked by voters — they picked their voters." – Ohio House minority leader [Allison Russo](#).
- "HJR 6 is not based on the sacred ideas of integrity and fairness." – [Rev. Jack Sullivan, Jr.](#), executive director of the Ohio Council of Churches.
- "These people, who are clearly fueled by the anti-choice lobby, are trying to silence the will of the Ohio people through the people's own government and wasting taxpayer money to do it." – [Lauren Beene](#), executive director of Ohio Physicians for Reproductive Rights.

Supporters

Supporters include Governor [Mike DeWine](#), Secretary of State [Frank LaRose](#), State Senate President [Matt Huffman](#), State Senators [Theresa Gavarone](#) and [Rob McColley](#), State Rep. [Brian Stewart](#), all Republicans, and Illinois businessman [Richard Uihlein](#). Organizations include the [Ohio Republican Party](#), [Ohio Right to Life](#), [the Center for Christian Virtue](#), [Ohio Chamber of Commerce](#), the Washington D.C.-based [American Center for Law & Justice](#), [Buckeye Firearm Association](#), [Greater Columbus Right to Life](#), and Washington D.C.-based [Heritage Action](#).

Opponents

Opponents include [former Ohio Republican governors](#) Robert Taft and John Kasich, along with [former Democratic governors](#) Dick Celeste and Ted Strickland; [former Republican attorneys general](#) Betty Montgomery and James Petro, along with [former Democratic attorneys general](#) Richard Cordray, Lee Fisher, and Nancy Rogers. Organizations include the [Ohio Democratic Party](#), [League of Women Voters of Ohio](#), [Ohio Citizen Action](#), [AFL-CIO](#), [Fraternal Order of Police](#), and the [Ohio Education Association](#).

How to Register and Vote in Ohio

See [VoteOhio.gov](#) for specifics.

Dates and Deadlines

Registration

July 10

Last day to register before the August 8 election.

Special Election Day

August 8

Special Election Day,
6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Note: A new Ohio law requires a **photo ID to register online and vote in person**, specifically an unexpired Ohio driver's license, a state ID card, a U.S. passport, or a military card. **Ohio student IDs no longer count.** If you get an Ohio state-issued ID, that will invalidate your driver's license in another state. If you don't have or want any of these forms of ID, you can register by mail and request an absentee ballot by mail. In both cases, **you can supply the last four digits of your Social Security number** instead of a photo ID.

Absentee Voting

July 11 - Absentee voting by mail begins.

July 11 - In-person early voting begins.

August 1 - Absentee ballot applications must be received by your [county board of elections](#) (by 8:30 p.m.). We recommend applying no later than July 23 to make sure you receive your ballot in time.

August 6 - Last day for in-person early voting.

August 7 - Final postmark date for mailed absentee ballots.

August 8 - Deadline for absentee ballots to be hand-delivered to your [county board of elections](#) (by 7:30 p.m.).

Resources

Ohio Secretary of State's Voting and Elections page: [VoteOhio.gov](#)

- Register [online](#).
- Get instructions and a printable form for [registering by mail](#).
- Get instructions for [absentee voting by mail](#).
- Fill out a printable form for [requesting an absentee ballot by mail](#).
- Find [valid forms of voter ID](#).
- Get [early in-person voting](#) dates, times, and the voting location for your county.
- Find [your polling location](#) on Special Election Day.



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