

The Need to Defeat Issue 1 On August 8th

Ohio voters who want to preserve democracy in this State must make certain to vote in the Special Election on Tuesday August 8th. They need to vote "no" on Issue I, a proposed Ohio Constitutional Amendment that would dramatically change the process for initiating and passing Constitutional Amendments. If approved, this proposal would make it much more difficult to pass a citizen initiated Ohio Constitutional Amendment proposal.

What changes are included in Issue I? If approved, it would require an Amendment proposal to receive a 60-percent majority of those who voted in order to become law instead of a simple majority. It would also raise the number of signatures of registered voters collected on petitions, and it would require signatures from all eighty-eight counties instead of the current requirement of forty-four counties to qualify a proposal for the Ohio ballot.

What motivated the Republican majority in the Senate and House to draft this Amendment proposal that would change the process that was put in place for amending the Ohio Constitution in 1913, and what further compelled them to establish August 8th for voting on this proposal? For one thing, it fits the pattern of an autocratic leaning GOP to decrease the rights of citizens to influence government actions and policies. Secondly, many Republican lawmakers want to prevent voters from initiating proposals to protect a woman's rights to have an abortion in reaction to the Supreme Court's overturning the Roe v. Wade decision last year. In Ohio, such an initiative in the form of a Constitutional Amendment is now in progress, and many Republicans declare that the passage of Issue I on August 8th will make it more difficult for the pro-abortion proposal to both get on the ballot in November or to achieve a 60-percent majority.

Concerned about the anti-democratic nature of Issue I and the special vote on August 8th, over two-hundred citizens' groups oppose it and are organizing to insure their members vote no. They include the Ohio League of Women Voters, Common Cause-Ohio and the American Civil Liberties Union. (Check their Web Sites for campaign events and ways people can get involved.) Meanwhile, even though this proposal is a product of Republican State Legislators, two former Republican Governors, Robert Taft and John Kasich, have publicly spoken out against it.

Nevertheless, opponents of Issue I know that nothing can be taken for granted. They realize that Republican proponents are courting a large "yes" vote from Ohioans who are anti-abortion. Supporters are also counting on the likelihood of a very low voter turnout on August 8th as a boost to their cause.

In conclusion, Applied Information urges readers of this newsletter to participate in this special election and to cast a "no" vote on Issue I. Early in person voting at the Board of Elections in Norwood started on July 11th, and voting absentee is available to those who are registered for this process. Also, please call your friends about the need to vote on August 8th.