

Ohio Clergy say 'Vote Yes' on Issue 1

Proverbs 14:15 states, "The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps."

On Tuesday, August 8th, Ohioans will vote on whether to raise the approval threshold to amend the Ohio State Constitution to sixty-percent (60%) of the vote instead of the current fifty-percent plus one. The proposed amendment will also require any initiative petition filed with the Secretary of State proposing to amend Constitution of the State of Ohio be signed by at least five-percent (5%) of the electors of every county. (1) Currently, signatures must be gathered for only 44 of Ohio's 88 counties.

As lead clergymen representing one hundred-twenty-four (124) diverse congregations, we believe the bar should be raised if a special interest group wants to amend the charter of our state. We believe it should be done by a broad consensus of at least sixty-percent (60%) of Ohioans.

Every public officer takes an oath to support the Ohio Constitution. Right now, two foundational pieces of Western Civilization, the sanctity of life and parents' rights are at risk.

This coming November 2023 election, Planned Parenthood and the ACLU will propose enshrining the murder of unborn babies into the Ohio Constitution and permitting underage minors to obtain gender-changing hormones and/or mutilate their bodies thru surgery without parental consent. (2) In future election cycles, amendments to legalize the gateway drug marijuana, and the repeal of election integrity laws are also expected. As faith leaders across seventeen counties, our firm conviction is that now is the time to safeguard our vulnerable State's fundamental principles.

Unlike the U.S. Constitution, our Ohio Constitution can easily be changed. This bare minimum threshold of fifty-percent plus one vote encourages the Secular Left to constantly bring defeated issues back before voters with more financial backing until they eventually pass. For comparison, the U.S. Constitution requires a two-thirds vote in both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, as well as 75% of state legislatures to formally ratify an amendment.

According to the National Archives Foundation, of the more than 11,000 proposed amendments to the U.S. Constitution throughout the nation's two centuries of its existence, only twenty-seven constitutional amendments have been ratified. (3) In contrast, the Ohio Constitution has been amended an astronomical 172 times. (4) Presently Massachusetts, Illinois, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Nebraska, Mississippi, Wyoming, and Florida already require a supermajority to pass petition-based constitutional amendments. (5)

According to Founding Father Alexander Hamilton, government has been instituted, "because the passions of men will not conform to the dictate of reason and justice without constraint." (6) Changing the State Constitution should be a slow process that moderates the intense passions of people in order to provide long-term stability to our system. In other words, the bedrock document our state's laws are based on should not change at a whim's notice.

After the 2008 Great Recession hit and Ohio was struck with a \$900 billion state budget deficit, voters the following year approved a constitutional amendment by a slim 53-47% margin. (7) In a knee-jerk reaction, voters gave two predatory businesses a casino monopoly. Previously four state constitution casino initiatives had been defeated.

Like a chew toy by the biggest dog at the Statehouse, the State Constitution became a convenient toy of a monopoly industry that set the odds in its favor. (8) As faith leaders, we do not want the State Constitution and ballot box to become part of someone's corporate business plan.

Proverbs 19 states, "It is not good for a soul to be without knowledge. He who sins hastens with his feet. The foolishness of a man twists his way, and his heart frets against the Lord."

In closing, Article 1 Section 7 of the Ohio Constitution states religion, morality, and knowledge, are essential to good government. As the abortion industry tries to transform our Ohio Constitution into an erasable white board, may Ohio voters raise the bar on August 8th to protect our Constitution and preserve our rich heritage. Vote Yes for Issue 1.

List of lead clergymen representing one hundred-twenty-four (124) congregations across seventeen counties in Ohio calling for registered voters to vote YES for the passage of Issue 1 in the August 8th, 2023 special election:

Pastor J.C. Church, Victory in Truth Ministries	Pastor Bruce Philippi, Journey Life Center
Pastor Ben Gregg, Plymouth Church of GOD	Pastor Jerry O'Brien, Orville Faith Harvest
Pastor Dink Porter, Mansfield Open Bible	Pastor Bryan Schatzinger, Calvary Chapel Mansfield
Pastor Brad Gentile, Shelby First Baptist	Pastor Denny Nezirick, Lexington Presbyterian
Pastor George Lewis, Shelby Temple of GOD	Pastor David Howell, Powerhouse Worship Ctr.
Pastor Dan Baer, Mansfield Gospel Assembly	Dr. Pastor Ricky Branham, Willard Ripley Chapel
Pastor Doug Tackett, Taylortown Community	Pastor Joseph Yerger, First Evangelical Presbyterian
Pastor Matt Pond, Shelby First Freewill Baptist	Pastor Mark Dettmer, Pleasant Grove Community
Pastor James Marshall, Ganges Community	Pastor Chad Hayes, Mansfield Caeserea Baptist
Pastor Kevin Evans, Ganges Liberty Lifesong	Pastor Art Kennard, Shelby Maranatha Christian
Pastor Jeremy Huff, Church of Jesus Christ	Pastor Ron Puff, Pleasant Valley Baptist
Pastor Robert Kurtz, Mansfield Temple Baptist	Pastor Russ Smith, Shiloh Wesley Evangelical
Pastor Rick Sutter, Shelby Elm Street Freewill	Pastor Eric Byrom, Mansfield Grace Fellowship
Pastor William Cole, Recovery Church	Pastor Christopher Thomas, Diamond Hills Baptist
Pastor Robert O'Brian, Apostolic Faith	Pastor Steve Burkhalter, Ontario Potter's House
Pastor Mark Meyer, Lexington Gracepoint	Pastor Brian Phillips, New Beginnings Freewill Baptist
Pastor Mike Rose, Hope on the Hill Chapel	Pastor Aaron Boggs, Fredericktown Freewill Baptist
Pastor William Strader, Bucyrus First Alliance	Pastor Ron Smals, Woodville Grace Brethren
Pastor Matt Merendino, Clear Fork Alliance	Pastor Floyd Allen, Philippian Community Church
Pastor Bobby Edwards, Jesus is Alive Holiness	Pastor Walter Moss, Canton Foursquare Church
Pastor Dallas Waggle, Lucas Foursquare	Pastor Jeff Mills, Mifflin Little Flock Fellowship
Pastor Layton Broome, Lakefork Methodist	Pastor Duane Hennen, Restoration Bible Church
Pastor Layton Broome, Hayesville Methodist	Reverend El Akuchie, Godsfield House of Prayer
Pastor Clint Zeigler, Sovereign Christ Church	Pastor Steve Brennemen, Awakening Christian Ctr.
Pastor Dan Rebon, Father's Heart Healing Ctr.	Pastor Rick Lewis, Shelby Connect Church
Pastor Dr. DeWayne Smith, Pricetown Methodist	Pastor Dr. DeWayne Smith, Newton Falls Methodist
Rabbi William Hallbrook, Ontario Sar Shalom	Bishop Anthony Cooper, Shelby Life Church
Pastor Randy Raynes, Fellowship Baptist	Pastor George Swain, Homerville Grace Brethren
Pastor Paul Lintern, Southside Christian	Pastor Paul Lintern, Oakland Lutheran Church
Pastor John Temple, Loudonville Trinity Baptist	Pastor Larry Whited, Abundant Grace Fellowship
Pastor Michael Constantino, Girard New Life	Pastor Les Vnasdale, Cornerstone Grace Brethren
Pastor Joseph Cameneti, Believers Church	Pastor Troy Thompson, Lorain Church North Coast
Pastor Tim Sheets, Middletown Oasis Church	Pastor Taylor Howard, Apostolic Holiness Church
Pastor Wade Hartzell, Shiloh Full Gospel	Pastor Dan Barker, Cortland Trinity Baptist

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Pastor Berry Carter, Massillon City Bible
Elder James DeWeese, Providence Church
Pastor Jonathan Moore, Grace Family Church
Pastor Paul Mathewson, Maranatha Bible
Pastor Mark Wireman, Shiloh Pentecostal
Pastor Lucian Baker, Christ the King Church
Pastor Robert Caw, Newark Church Triumphant
Pastor Matt Potosky, Albion Church of Brethren
Pastor Rusty Wills, Christ Community Church
Pastor David Bates, Galion Unity Freewill
Pastor Jason Price, Mansfield Victory Baptist
Pastor Larry Hill, Bethel Freewill Baptist
Pastor Louis Blevins, Mansfield Latter Rain
Pastor LaMont Lindsay, Book of Life Church
Pastor Rick Wiseman, Promised Land Church
Pastor Ferlie Yates, Hanna Road Church GOD
Pastor Bill Fox, Crestline Faith Community
Elder Darryl Hall, Mansfield Holiness Chapel
Pastor Dave Natale, Church at Warren
Pastor Emeritus Steve Schag, Shelby Calvary
Pastor Dana Gammill, Cathedral of Life
Pastor Sheldon Mencer, Mission 3:16 Church
Pastor James Spencer, Peoples' Baptist
Pastor Miler Montoya, Kingdom Vision Church
Pastor Rob Ratcliff, North Woodbury Freewill
Pastor Dennis Eggerton, Danville Grace
Pastor David Mahon, Galion Apostolic Assembly
Pastor James Hill, Mansfield Paradise Church
Pastor Steven Baldrige, Rome Community Church
Pastor Patrick Bailey, Danville Church of Brethren
Pastor Patrick Bailey, Butler North Bend of Brethren
Pastors Les & Grace Farley, Lexington Irresistible Church
Pastor Joe Maggelet, Ashland Fellowship Christian
Pastor Dave Garlich, Hubbard Calvary Baptist
Pastor Paul Bartholomew, Mohican Church of Brethren
Pastor Faron Cole, Eastern Road Church of GOD
Pastor Joe Smith, Ontario Westside Baptist
Pastor Nickolas Kelly, North Liberty Community
Pastor Joe Nichols, ARK Empowerment Center
Pastor John Campos, Bowman Street Church GOD
Pastor Brian Snow, Fredericktown First Baptist
Pastor Clyde Kerby, Hope & Healing Ministries
Pastor Danny Akers, Victory Rock Praise & Worship
Pastor Chris Spencer, Crestline Grace Baptist
Pastor James Mitchell, Polk New Liberty Baptist
Bishop Sylvester Ginn, Hesed Agape Fellowship
Rabbi Bob Bauer, Crestline Beit El Elyon Fellowship
Pastor Chad Berry, Lexington New Liberty Baptist
Pastor Justin Lawhorn, New Vision Crestline COG
Pastor Tim Houston, Mansfield Church of GOD
Pastor Jack Williams, Walker Lake Baptist
Pastor Glen Phillips, Hillside First Church of GOD
Pastor David Parsons, Zion's Refuge Baptist
Pastor Mark Galambos, Aurora Awakening Church
Elder Henry Bradley, New Temple Community COGIC
Pastor Rich Hurles, Plymouth LifePoint Church

The above listed clergy co-signers have congregations located in (17) counties throughout Ohio: Richland (73), Crawford (10), Trumbull (9), Knox (6), Ashland (5), Morrow (4), Wayne (4), Stark (3), Mahoning (2), Coshocton (1), Huron (1), Licking (1), Lorain (1), Marion (1), Medina (1), Portage (1), & Warren (1).

References:

- 1) Certified Ballot Language for Issue 1, Ohio Secretary of State, <https://www.ohiosos.gov/globalassets/ballotboard/2023/certified-ballot-language-for-issue-1.pdf>
- 2) "Late-term abortion, kids' trans surgeries speed to an August 8 showdown," by Suzanne Bowdey, American Family News, July 12, 2023, <https://afn.net/opinion/suzanne-bowdey/2023/07/12/late-term-abortion-kids-trans-surgeries-speed-to-an-august-8-showdown/>
- 3) "Amendments to the U.S. Constitution," National Archives Foundation, <https://www.archivesfoundation.org/amendments-u-s-constitution/>
- 4) "August election does not subvert democracy | Opinion," by Orlando Sonza, Cincinnati Inquirer, June 5, 2023, <https://www.cincinnati.com/story/opinion/contributors/2023/06/05/making-amendments-harder-protects-ohios-constitution-opinion/70272280007/>
- 5) "LaRose joins Rep Stewart to announce smart reforms that will safeguard Ohio's Constitution from special interests," November 17, 2022, press release, <https://www.ohiosos.gov/media-center/press-releases/2022/2022-11-17a/>
- 6) "Original Intent: the Courts, Constitution, & Religion," p. 277, by David Barton, 2010, Fifth Edition, Third printing, Wallbuilder Press.
- 7) "Pastors unwilling to roll the dice," by Erik Shilling, Mansfield News Journal, p. A1, October 26, 2009
- 8) "Give the Ohio Constitution a break: Vote 'no' on Issue 2: David Zanotti," Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 18, 2010, <https://www.cleveland.com/opinion/2010/04/give-the-ohio-constitution-a-b.html>