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**“With God All Things Are Possible”**

Ohio State Motto    Matthew 19:26

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**Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission**  
**June 8, 2017**

*Co-chairs Senator Tavares, Representative Dever and members of the Commission, my name is Matt Lynch, and as an attorney and former State Representative from Geauga County, I offer the following written testimony on the Initiative and Referendum Report and Recommendation submitted to you by the Constitutional Revision and Updating Committee:*

I believe the voters of Ohio will see the proposed changes to the ballot initiative process as nothing less than an attack on the people's right to amend the Ohio Constitution through the ballot initiative.

The right of citizens to propose and pass amendments to the Ohio Constitution through the ballot initiative process was wisely added to our constitution by the people over a century ago. No matter how well intentioned, Ohio citizens will likely see the recommended change as just another example of how some politicians think they know better than the people they represent.

The sub-committee recommendation would add extraordinary burdens and restrictions on citizen-initiated amendments while those same burdens and restrictions would not apply to amendments proposed by the legislature. Such a double standard is breathtaking -- and no other state has such unfair rules. The use and availability of the ballot initiative process by citizens should be carefully guarded and any attempt to limit this power of the people should be rejected.

The commission's pending recommendation to limit the people's power to initiate and enact constitutional amendments strikes at the heart of our democracy and the ability of the people of Ohio to shape the constitutional framework of their own government. The commission should nip this ill-conceived proposal in the bud by rejecting the recommendation to add burdens and restrictions to the initiated amendment process.

Respectfully submitted,

