

Written by Kathy
Monday, 08 May 2023 17:08



Picture: Women's March Cleveland leads some 2,500 women and their supporters via a protest for reproductive rights and abortion access held on October 2, 2021 at Market Square Park in Cleveland, Ohio, a sister march to marches held in cities across the country that day spearheaded by Women's March National out of Washington, D.C. (Photo by David Petkiewicz of the Cleveland Plain Dealer Newspaper and Cleveland.com)

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Staff article

COLUMBUS, Ohio- The language that will appear on the statewide ballot on Aug. 8 in Ohio for voters to decide whether to make it more difficult to amend or change the Ohio constitution was set Thursday by an Ohio Ballot Board chaired by Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose, a Republican hellbent on stopping voter approval in November of a possible ballot issue on abortion.

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Led by LaRose, the ballot board voted 3-2 in support of the ballot language

The August ballot issue has been dubbed state Issue 1 as Democrats and Republicans fight it out in a state that now trends red and where not one statewide office, other than three seats on the Ohio Supreme Court, is held by Democrats.

Specifically, voters will be asked in August, via the language approved today by the ballot board, whether or not they support raising the threshold for passing future constitutional amendments from the simple majority to a 60% supermajority.

The Republican-dominated Ohio House of Representatives passed a resolution last Wednesday primarily along party lines to put the constitutional threshold amendment issue on the ballot this summer. Separate legislation pushed by LaRose and House and other Republicans that would have paid for the special election got scrapped in committee after some Republicans who oppose the resolution would not come on board.

In short, voters will determine this summer, via a special election, whether to change the process for citizens to seek voter approved changes or amendments to the Ohio constitution.

The resolution, titled Senate Joint Resolution 2, passed the Ohio House last week 62-37 with all Democrats and five Republicans opposing the controversial measure. If seven instead of five Republicans had voted no, it would have failed as it needed a three fourths vote to pass. The Senate, which is overwhelmingly Republican, adopted the resolution April 19 by a vote of 26-7 with all Democrats opposing it and all Republicans voting yes.

Democrats have chastised Republicans for an August 8th special election that they say is unfunded and undemocratic across the board while Senate President Matt Huffman, a Republican, said LaRose's office has enough funding for the special election, and that if he needs more, lawmakers will reimburse him. Ohio Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio, a Lakewood Democrat whose 23rd state legislative district includes 14 of Cleveland's 17 wards, was livid and said that Republicans are undermining the democrat process, and Ohioans.

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SJR2 comes as pro abortion advocates continue collecting signatures in an effort to get abortion on the ballot in November to possibly derail a state law that is on hold per a judge's ruling but that outlaws abortion in Ohio after six weeks of pregnancy, or once a fetal heartbeat is detected.

Hundreds of opponents of SJR2, following a picket there a week and a half ago, packed the statehouse in Columbus again on last Wednesday. The resolution itself is a proposed amendment, and if voters agree to its provisions at the ballot box this summer it would, in raising the threshold for a constitutional amendment from a simple majority to a 60 percent vote of the electorate, require citizens to get voter signatures from all 88 counties instead of 44 to place a measure on the ballot. It would also eliminate a 10-day period in which petitioners can replace any invalid signatures.

Petitioners need more than 413,000 valid signatures by July 5 for a ballot initiative that seeks to enshrine the legal right to an abortion into the Ohio constitution. Abortion advocates, however, must now fight to collect necessary signatures in hopes of getting the abortion issue before voters in November while simultaneously campaigning to keep voters from upping the threshold by which the constitution in Ohio is amended.

The conservative-leaning U.S. Supreme Court last summer overturned *Roe v Wade*, a 1973 landmark decision that made abortion legal nationwide, and relegated authority to either restrict or outright outlaw abortion to the country's respective state legislatures.

Ohio's Republican governor, Mike DeWine, also a former U.S. senator and state attorney general, has pledged to do everything within his power to outlaw abortion in Ohio.

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We interviewed former president Barack Obama one-on-one when he was campaigning for president. As to the Obama interview,

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