

# ISSUE 1 FAQ



## OHIO AGRIBUSINESS ASSOCIATION

### What is Issue 1?

Ohio Issue 1, part of a special election to be held on August 8, is a proposed state constitutional amendment proposed by the Joint Resolution of the Ohio General Assembly that would:

- Require that any proposed amendment to the Constitution of the State of Ohio receive the approval of at least 60 percent of eligible voters voting on the proposed amendment.
- Require that any initiative petition filed on or after January 1, 2024, with the Secretary of State proposing to amend the Constitution of the State of Ohio be signed by at least five percent of the electors of each county based on the total vote in the county for governor in the last preceding election.
- Specify that additional signatures may not be added to an initiative petition proposing to amend the Constitution of the State of Ohio that is filed with the Secretary of State on or after January 1, 2024, proposing to amend the Constitution of the State of Ohio.

A majority yes vote is necessary for the amendment to pass. If passed, the amendment will be effective immediately.

### What exactly does that mean?

Issue 1 asks eligible Ohio voters to consider an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Ohio proposed by a two-thirds majority of the Ohio General Assembly. The amendment, if approved, would elevate the standards by which the Constitution of the State of Ohio may be amended. Any newly proposed constitutional amendment placed on a statewide ballot must receive at least 60 percent of the vote to be approved. Any initiated petition proposing to amend the Constitution of the State of Ohio that is filed with the Secretary of State on or after January 1, 2024, must contain the signatures of at least five percent of the eligible voters residing in each county of the state. Finally, the amendment specifies that new signatures may not be added to an initiative petition proposing to amend the Constitution of the State of Ohio once it has been filed with the Secretary of State on or after January 1, 2024.

### Why does OABA support Issue 1?

The need for a stable and predictable business environment in our state is vital. The purpose of this ballot measure is not limited to a specific issue; it aims to promote the participation of all regions in the state when determining constitutional amendments that would affect every Ohioan. As advocates for our industry, OABA backs Issue 1 because it is an initiative that will strengthen the integrity and efficacy of Ohio's constitutional amendment process and guarantees that changes made to our state constitution are done so openly and fairly.

Changes are often proposed through ballot initiatives regarding how agriculture is done. However, we in agriculture are always learning and using new and improved techniques. When

changes are mandated by a constitutional amendment, it restricts the industry's ability to quickly adjust and adapt without having to change the constitution again.

In the recent past, external special interest groups have attempted to promote anti-agricultural measures that make domestic food production more challenging, while incentivizing imports from foreign countries. Approving Issue 1 would mean Ohio would take a more deliberate approach to amending the state's constitution, thereby safeguarding agriculture in our state and ensuring the state's food security.

### **Why is it important to OABA to raise the threshold for approving constitutional amendments to 60%?**

Ohio is one of only 19 states in the country that allow for these direct citizen initiatives: however, many of those states have additional requirements beyond a simple majority for a constitutional amendment to be approved and implemented. Currently, if the Ohio General Assembly proposes a constitutional amendment through a joint resolution, it requires a three-fifths majority vote for it to pass. This proposal aims to establish the same threshold for all constitutional amendments in Ohio.

A constitutional amendment is a method through which citizens can propose and request changes to laws in Ohio. However, it's important to note that this change would only affect proposed constitutional amendments and not other types of changes.

### **What about modifying the requirements for the petition process and signature collection?**

Currently, organizers are only required to collect signatures from half of Ohio's counties to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot. This means that rural communities are often disregarded, as their support is not heavily sought after. However, amending the constitution should require widespread support from Ohioans in all types of communities. The current process tends to favor the interests of large metropolitan areas over those of small and rural communities. By collecting signatures in all counties in Ohio, we can foster a more engaged voter base and encourage important conversations about agricultural issues.

### **What are the issues with the current process of amending the state's constitution?**

We support a more careful process for amending the constitution, and our members believe the constitution should be preserved as the foundation of self-governance and protecting citizens' rights, rather than being manipulated by special interests. The U.S. Constitution allows amendments to be proposed by Congress or a constitutional convention, requiring specific majorities for approval. In Ohio, however, a simple majority is enough to pass a constitutional amendment, and a small percentage of voters can sign a petition to get it on the ballot. We advocate for a higher threshold in Ohio. This proposal only applies to changes in Ohio's constitution, not the process for amending laws. Establishing a consistent and fair standard in Ohio would ensure equal representation and clear results on Election Day. It would also enhance engagement, understanding of the issues and confidence in the outcome.

