



THE OHIO SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 10, 2011

Contact: Nicole Staples
(614) 644-5533

Senate Democrats Introduce Legislation to Protect the People's Right to Referendum

Limits General Assembly's ability to undo the will of the people

Columbus – Senate Democratic Leader Capri S. Cafaro (D-Hubbard) and members of the Senate Democratic Caucus today announced legislation that would require the General Assembly to respect the will of the people after a statewide referendum or initiative. The legislation is a joint resolution to amend Ohio's constitution to prevent state legislators from circumventing the referendum or initiative process.

"The General Assembly should not defy the will of the people by enacting legislation after voters have had their say at the ballot box," said Senator Cafaro. "We need consensus and cooperation to tackle the challenges facing Ohio—not more partisan attacks."

The joint resolution calling for a constitutional amendment would protect the people's voice in five ways:

- Forbids the legislature from re-enacting laws that are "identical or substantially similar" to laws rejected by referendum for a "cooling-off" period of two years.
- Forbids the legislature from changing or repealing laws enacted through the people's right to initiative for a "cooling-off" period of two years.
- Forbids the legislature from amending, repealing or re-enacting a legislative act until it becomes effective law.
- Forbids the legislature from changing laws that are certified for referendum or while the signature gathering process is underway (unless the referendum petition is withdrawn).
- Resets the 90-day clock for signature gathering if a court upholds the people's right to referendum in ruling against a legal challenge.

The provisions of this amendment can be overridden by a two-thirds majority in both chambers to give the General Assembly flexibility to deal with circumstances that require immediate action.

“Instead of waging another divisive debate over collective bargaining, it’s time to bring our state together,” said Senator Turner. “We should focus on rebuilding Ohio’s economy and creating more good paying jobs.”

Senate Democrats will encourage their Republican colleagues to join as co-sponsors of this legislation to build a spirit of bipartisanship.