

Alan Johnson - A Vote No Prevents Lawmakers from Silencing the Public Voice

Regardless of your position on choice, a NO VOTE on ISSUE 1 on Aug. 8 is critical because the Republican 60% power-grab would not only silence Ohio voters on abortion, but on EVERY ISSUE in the future. It is undemocratic, unethical and violates the law against August elections the legislature approved just six months ago.

I believe in the sanctity of all life, including opposition to the death penalty.

But I also believe in democracy and the value of one person, one vote. Issue 1 would tilt the playing field so radically that lawmakers have the power to do whatever they want while making it practically impossible for the public to have a voice on important issues. The 60-percent requirement has been the focus, but new rules also require petitioners to get signatures from all 88 instead of 44 counties, a very challenging task, and eliminate the "cure period." That is where petitioners fall short of the required number of valid signatures of registered voters, but are given time to gather more signatures. It happens many times on statewide issue campaigns.

Voting NO in Issue 1 in no way nullifies your chance to vote your conscience on the choice issue in November. That is something everyone should have a right to decide in their own mind.

But NO on Issue 1 prevents lawmakers from silencing the public voice on any issue in the future. NO on Issue 1.

Alan Johnson is a former journalist who spent 44 years with Ohio newspapers, including 33 years at the *Columbus Dispatch* where he reported on capital punishment and personally witnessed 21 executions. He is the author of a book, *Death and Forgiveness, My Capital Punishment Witness*.