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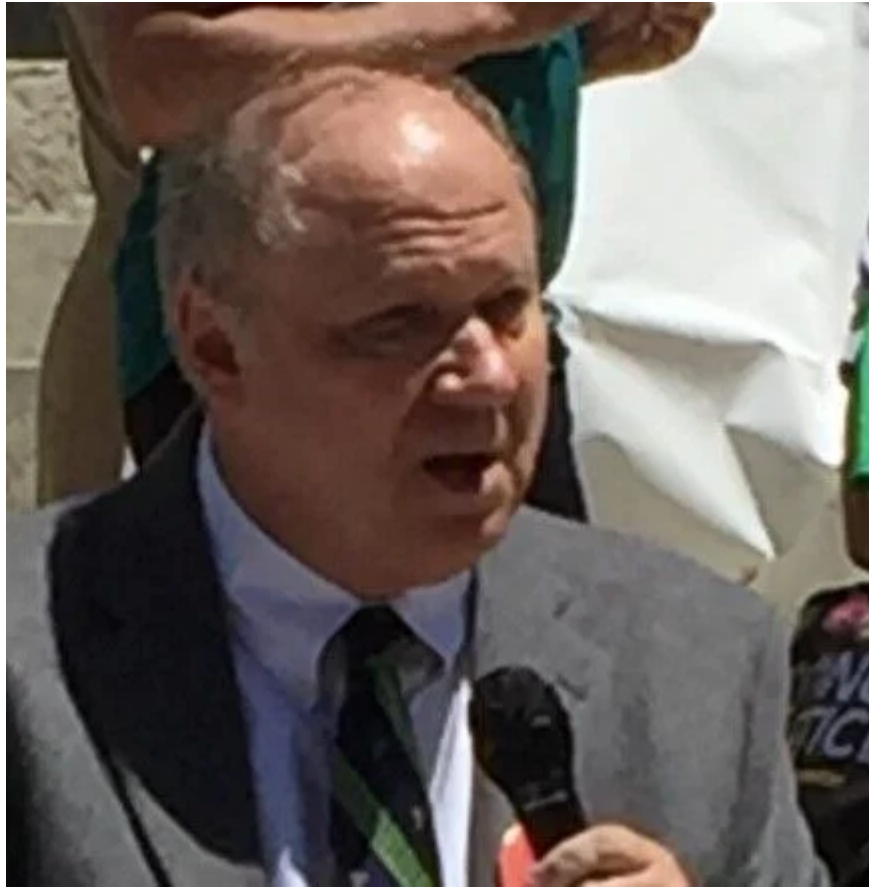
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Letter: Stewart and Ohio Republicans have Poked the Bear. Vote 'NO' 8 August

By Brad Cotton
May 15, 2023

 **A '90s ICON**





Brad Cotton

Illegitimate Ohio Republicans voted 10 May to waste \$20 million of your tax dollars to take away your rights and silence your voice.

I ask limited government conservatives “Do you believe the state has the absolute right to make critical health care decisions for your sisters, your wives, daughters and granddaughters?”

Do you believe that Ohio women must face death rather than receive a life-saving abortion? Do you believe that if your personal religious or moral beliefs are against abortion that you have the right to force, yes force your personal values on others?”

Illegitimate Ohio Republicans 10 May answered “yes” to these questions and are willing to cheat and strip rights granted to you by the Ohio 1912 constitutional convention.

Illegitimate? Yes. Ohio legislature Republicans are illegitimate. Many were “elected” from gerrymandered districts after defying seven Ohio Supreme Court rulings that their secretly crafted electoral maps gave them, the Republicans, an unconstitutional advantage.

Gerrymandering is cheating. Gerrymandering is loading the dice, palming all the aces and king cards, giving oneself all the high rent Monopoly properties before the game begins. Gerrymandering means Republicans pick their voters, rather than the voters choosing them. With computer-assisted gerrymandering it is possible for one party with 40% of voters to hold 60% of legislative seats. Statewide races can't be gerrymandered.

Democratic Senate candidate Tim Ryan lost the November 2022 election to Republican J.D. Vance by 4 points. Trump won 53% of the Ohio presidential vote in 2020. The numbers of registered Democrats and Republicans in Ohio are nearly 50/50 Yet Republicans hold 67 out of 99 of Ohio House seats and 26 out of 32 Senate seats.

Extremist views win in gerrymandered districts, more moderate or reasoned ideas lose. We, the people lose. In such districts, the only threat to a Republican campaigning for re-election is the primary. Historically and factually, primaries bring out the most partisan and ideological voters.

So do low turnout August elections. At most, 10% of voters turnout in August. Stated again, the most extreme views win in low turn-out elections. Thus, all of Ohio's former governors and five former attorneys general have spoken against holding an August special election wherein 5% of Ohio voters could permanently enshrine 41% minority rule under HJR1/ SJR2.

Ignoring these more seasoned voices, it is full speed ahead for Rep. Brian Stewart (R-Ashville) and anti-democracy Ohio Republicans. Our Rep. Brian Stewart and 62 Ohio Republican House legislators are banking on their cadre of loyalists and theocrats turning out 8 August and voting to change the rules in the middle of the game while the rest of us aren't watching. They want to gut, kill, cut the legs off a pro-choice constitutional amendment before more representative and rational Ohioans, which polls show support such an amendment, will go to the polls in November.

To be fair Republican Reps. Callender, Edwards, Hillyer, LaRe and Patton voted against SJR2. Stewart claims he is interested in democracy. Hogwash. Stewart's own words reveal that this is all about silencing a pro-choice and anti-gerrymandering majority.

If Stewart and his fellow Republicans were genuinely interested in hearing from the widest cross-section of Ohio voters, they would place their alleged "constitutional protection" initiative on the November 2024 ballot. Stewart and his cronies can't

gerrymander the state; thus, they want to cheat, deal from the bottom of the deck and change the rules.

Unless we vote “NO” in August it will become nearly impossible for you and I to be heard as Stewart’s HJR1 erects nearly insurmountable barriers for us to curb an out-of-control unrepresentative, gerrymandered legislature with statewide constitutional initiatives. These folks have defied the Ohio Supreme Court seven times, now they don’t want to hear from you either. Stewart’s legislation allows for 40% minority rule and makes crushing, prohibitive demands on petition circulators.

The Ohio 1912 constitutional Convention addressed a similarly out-of-touch, out-of-control legislature by making sure we, the people, could be more easily heard through constitutional initiatives. Were Teddy Roosevelt in Ohio now he would join our former governors and attorneys general in condemning Stewart’s dishonorable democracy-limiting HJR1’ SJR2, saying now as he did in Ohio in 1912: “I protest against any theory that would make of the constitution a means of thwarting instead of securing the absolute right of the people to rule themselves.”

Stewart and Ohio Republicans want to thwart us. Let us rise up 8 August and show them what happens when they poke the bear. Vote “NO” 8 August and remove Stewart from office November 2024.



A forthcoming column will focus on the very real life-threatening dangers that so-called pro-life legislation poses to women. We will hear from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Emergency Physicians and the federal department of Health and Human services.

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