

Redistricting reform backers can (again) begin collecting signatures for November 2024 ballot

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – Backers of a plan that would strip Ohio politicians of power over drawing state legislative and congressional boundaries can begin collecting signatures for a proposed state constitutional amendment – again.

The Ohio Ballot Board, led by Secretary of State Frank LaRose, voted Monday to advance the proposal for the second time after organizers restarted the process [because of a typographical error in the summary of the petition](#). In both cases, the board could have split the proposal into multiple issues, requiring the campaign to collect hundreds of thousands of signatures for each one.

But, as it did in October, the board took a unanimous and bipartisan vote at the Ohio Statehouse to let the proposal advance as a single issue. Don McTigue, an attorney representing the backers of the proposal, told the ballot board that only the typo in the summary was fixed and that the amendment itself was unchanged.

Citizens Not Politicians, the group backing the amendment, now can begin the process of collecting more than 400,000 signatures from 44 of 88 Ohio counties before a July deadline to qualify for the November 2024 ballot.

If approved by voters, [the amendment would replace the seven-member panel of elected officials](#) who draw the boundaries with a 15-member Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission made up equally of Democrats, Republicans and unaffiliated voters.

Current and former politicians, political party officials and lobbyists would not be allowed to serve on the commission. The proposal would make it unconstitutional to draw districts that favor any political party or politician.

The amendment would require Ohio to draw new state legislative and congressional districts in 2025.

Former Ohio Supreme Court Justice Maureen O'Connor, a Republican, is [leading the effort](#) to put the amendment before voters next year. She sided with Democrats on the court in striking down GOP-drawn maps that were favorable to Republicans, but [she left the court at the end of last year because of age limits](#).

Republicans used their maps anyway, despite the rulings from the court that they were unconstitutional, and racked up historic supermajorities in the Ohio House and Senate. The GOP also holds 10 of the 15 congressional seats in Ohio. Earlier this year, the Ohio Redistricting Commission's two Democrats voted with Republicans in approving new state legislative maps that still favor Republicans.

Still, Democrats are expected to support the proposal. Republicans, however, say maps passed with Democratic support show that the current redistricting process adopted by voters in 2018 works as intended.

Some of the state's top Republicans, including Larose, a candidate for U.S. Senate, and [Gov. Mike DeWine](#), have been noncommittal about the proposal.

The ballot board first [cleared the proposal](#) to begin gathering signatures on Oct. 12. But, soon after, [organizers realized that they had made a typographical error](#) in the proposal that had gone unnoticed to that point. They restarted the process, which includes [a review by Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost](#) before the ballot board's vote.

"The current system is deeply flawed because politicians – Democrats and Republicans – draw districts to favor their own political interests," O'Connor said in a prepared statement. "Ohio is one of the country's most gerrymandered states, and this proposal would end that by empowering citizens, not politicians, to draw fair districts using an open and independent process."