

Redistricting amendment campaign begins collecting voter signatures for 2024 ballot

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COLUMBUS, Ohio – The campaign to put a redistricting reform amendment up for a statewide vote next year has begun gathering the hundreds of thousands of voter signatures needed for the measure to qualify.

A spokesperson for Citizens Not Politicians said the group's representatives are fanning out across the state, including sending volunteers to Cleveland.

"It's pretty substantial. We're hitting the ground hard," said the spokesperson, Chris Davey.

The proposal from Citizens Not Politicians, led by a pair of former Ohio Supreme Court justices, Republican Maureen O'Connor and Democrat Yvette McGee Brown, would replace a panel of elected officials who draw Ohio's state legislative and congressional district maps with a newly created citizen's commission.

The 15-member commission would be composed of five Republicans, five Democrats and five political independents. None would be allowed to be a former or current elected official, and there are other restrictions banning lobbyists and people who have worked for a political party or political campaign or been a major political donor from being eligible as well.

The maps would go into effect for the 2026 election, replacing maps the redistricting commission approved in September with bipartisan support, if voters approve the amendment.

To qualify for the ballot, the group must collect 413,487 valid signatures by July 3, including a minimum amount from 44 of Ohio's 88 counties, under state laws that lay out the constitutional amendment process. Typically ballot issue campaigns target public places like shopping centers and libraries where large numbers of people gather.

The group got the legal green light to begin signature gathering last week after the Ohio Ballot Board, chaired by Republican Secretary of State Frank LaRose certified that the proposed redistricting amendment contained a single proposal. The ballot board previously signed off on the proposed amendment in October, but the group had to re-launch the legal process, which also included getting petition language approved by Republican Attorney General Dave Yost, after it found a typo with potential legal ramifications in the amendment language.