



OHIO CONSTITUTIONAL MODERNIZATION COMMISSION

REVISED MINUTES OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION AND UPDATING COMMITTEE

FOR THE MEETING HELD
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2013

Call to Order:

Chair Dennis Mulvihill called the meeting of the Constitutional Revision and Updating Committee to order at 9:15 a.m.

Members Present:

A quorum was present with Chair Mulvihill and committee members Abaray, Asher, Beckett, Murray, Obhof, Readler, and Walinski in attendance.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes of the August 8, 2013 meeting of the committee were reviewed and approved.

Presentations and Discussion:

Chair Mulvihill recognized Maurice A. Thompson, executive director of the 1851 Center for Constitutional Law.

Mr. Thompson's presentation centered on proposed alterations to the Ohio Constitution's initiative and referendum processes. Mr. Thompson stated that, "access to I&R gives Ohioans the capacity to behave as civic adults, rather than the children of legislators and other public officials." Mr. Thompson continued that the initiative and referendum process advances civic involvement and adds an additional check on government actions. Mr. Thompson also warned against efforts to reduce access to the initiative and referendum process through raising signature requirements and shortening petition circulation times. He then suggested improvements to the initiative and referendum process, including restricting tax increases to the November ballot. Mr. Thompson added that the General Assembly has too much access to the constitutional amendment process. Mr. Thompson also expressed concern with the initiated statute, specifically, its high cost, short time frame, and low passage rate.

Chair Mulvihill asked Mr. Thompson if there are specific constitutional amendments he thinks are cumbersome. Mr. Thompson responded that the language regarding property lines specifically related to the Ohio casino sections should be examined as an example of cumbersome constitutional language.

Committee member Janet Abaray inquired about the fiduciary interests of a group that would advocate for or against a specific constitutional amendment. Mr. Thompson verified that interests from outside the state may invest in those efforts.

The committee asked the witness numerous questions regarding the referendum and initiative process, which Mr. Thompson answered. Chair Mulvihill asked Mr. Thompson to provide an electronic copy of his testimony to be distributed to the committee.

Adjournment:

With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Approval:

The minutes of the September 12, 2013 meeting of the Constitutional Revision and Updating Committee were approved at the October 10, 2013 meeting of the committee.

/s/ Dennis P. Mulvihill
Dennis P. Mulvihill, Chair

/s/ Charles F. Kurfess
Charles F. Kurfess, Vice-chair