

Two proposed amendments get initial OK



By [Marty Schladen](#)
The Columbus Dispatch

Nov. 27, 2017

Attorney General Mike DeWine on Monday announced that he had OK'd the first batch of signatures for each of two efforts to amend the Ohio Constitution.

Both are intended to keep moneyed interests from overriding the will of local voters by pressuring the Ohio General Assembly, said Tish O'Dell, spokeswoman for the Ohio Community Rights Network, the four-year-old-group pushing the amendments.

"It's 'we the people,' not 'we the corporations,'" she said.

One of the measures is the [Ohio Community Rights Amendment](#).

"This amendment secures the right of local, community self government for the people of Ohio by guaranteeing local authority to enact laws to protect the unalienable rights and the health, safety and welfare of community members and natural ecosystems, free from state pre-emption or corporate interference," it says.

O'Dell said it's intended to keep the legislature from overriding local ordinances such as Grove City's puppy mill ban or a predatory lending law in Toledo. The Ohio General Assembly overrode both, O'Dell said.

The other measure, [The Initiative and Referendum Amendment for Counties and Townships](#), would give residents in those bodies the ability to initiate statutes and referenda.

"Currently, they don't have the same rights as cities and villages do," O'Dell said.

Both measures are a long way from becoming part of the Constitution.

So far, 1,000 signatures have been validated for each. Now the Ohio Ballot Board must determine if the amendments each contain a single issue or multiple issues, the attorney general's office said.

Then supporters must gather a number of signatures equal to 10 percent of the total number who voted in the last gubernatorial election. They must be spread among 44 of Ohio's 88 counties and in each county they must be equal to 5 percent of the number who voted in the last governor's election.

mschladen@dispatch.com