



## APA Ohio Policy Memorandum

RE: August 8 Special Election – Issue 1

To APA Ohio Members and Affiliates:

This policy memorandum is a *call to attention* regarding the August 8 Special Election and *call to action* for all Ohio voters to participate. The APA Ohio Board of Trustees considers the following information vital to our membership and planning practice in the state of Ohio.

**On August 8<sup>th</sup>, a joint resolution (SJR2) is on the ballot to amend the Ohio Constitution** to raise the threshold of votes required to approve any future constitutional amendment from a simple majority (50% plus one) to a supermajority (at least 60%) of the electors. If passed, it would also expand the requirements for initiating proposed amendments via petition by requiring signatures from every county in the state, where currently signatures from only half the counties in the state are required.

**The amendment proposes to limit the power of citizen engagement in Ohio legislation.** The proposed resolution, if passed, will decrease citizen power to enact change in Ohio legislation. Citizen engagement is paramount to the democratic process and a top Planning Principle within the APA Ohio Policy Platform.

**The amendment would limit bond-financing feasibility for future statewide initiatives.** The Ohio Constitution contains a debt limit of \$750,000 (set in 1851). Because of this constraint, the legislature seeks funding support from the voters in the form of bonds issued as constitutional amendments. This funding strategy has enabled a vast array of statewide initiatives including brownfield remediation and environmental conservation funding, veterans' compensation, statewide infrastructure projects, and home loan and rental assistance programs. Statewide funding programs such as these increase the quality of life of Ohio citizens and advance key positions of the APA Ohio Policy Platform on housing, sustainability, infrastructure planning, and more.

**Voter turnout for special elections is a challenge.** The APA Ohio Board of Trustees encourages all Ohio planning practitioners to consider whether the approval of this legislation (SJR2) serves the public interest, and to please vote in the upcoming August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Ohio Special Election.

**Further Reading:**

[Unintended consequences? If amendments are harder to pass so are bonds - Ohio Capital Journal](#)

[Ohio scrambles before August election on constitution changes: NPR](#)

[Ohio House votes to send 60% approval amendment to special election in August | The Statehouse News Bureau \(statenews.org\)](#)

[Statewide Issue History - Ohio Secretary of State \(ohiosos.gov\)](#)

[APAOH | Legislative \(ohioplanning.org\)](#)