

COUNTY:

Allen

NUMBER:

0001

INITIATIVE PETITION

Amendment to the Constitution

Proposed by Initiative Petition

To be submitted directly to the electors

AMENDMENT

TITLE

Protecting Ohioans' Constitutional Rights

SUMMARY

This Amendment would add a new section 22 to Article I of the Ohio Constitution:

The Protecting Ohioans' Constitutional Rights Amendment creates a private cause of action on behalf of persons whose rights, privileges and immunities under Ohio's Constitution are violated, or caused to be violated, by "government actors." Government actors under the terms of this Amendment include (1) the "State" of Ohio, which is defined to include, but is not limited to, the offices of all elected state officers and all departments and other instrumentalities of the State of Ohio, (2) "political subdivisions" of Ohio, which is defined to mean any body corporate or politic responsible for governmental activities within a geographic subsection of the State, including but not limited to a municipal corporation, township, county, or school district, and (3) "public employees" of the State or its political subdivisions, which is defined to mean any individual who is an officer, agent, employee, or servant, of the State or a political subdivision, whether or not compensated or full-time or part-time, if that individual is authorized to act and is acting within the scope of the officer's, agent's, employee's, or servant's employment by the State or political subdivision, as well as any individual or "business entity," which is defined to include corporations, associations, firms, limited liability companies, partnerships, sole proprietorships, or other entities engaged in business, that is an independent contractor of the State or one of its political subdivisions and who is authorized to act and is acting under the color of law.

A "government actor," as defined above, is liable under this Amendment for its deprivation of a person's constitutional rights if it is proven by a preponderance of evidence that the government actor's acts or omissions caused the person to be deprived of any constitutional right under the Ohio Constitution. In addition to being liable as government actors for causing deprivations of persons' constitutional rights under the Ohio Constitution, the State and its political subdivisions, whether or not joined as defendants in any civil action created by this Amendment, are also liable for the conduct of their public employees, including independent contractors, who are found liable based on a preponderance of the evidence for deprivations of a person's constitutional rights under this Amendment, and who are also proven by a preponderance of evidence to have been acting on behalf of, under color of, or within the course or scope of authority granted by the State or political subdivision.

Terminating a public employee shall not affect the liability of the State or political subdivision for the terminated public employee's conduct.

Ohio's Courts of Common Pleas have subject matter jurisdiction over the civil action created by this Amendment. Venue over the civil action created by this Amendment shall be determined by Ohio's laws and rules of venue that are applicable to civil actions.

In any action filed under this Amendment, no government actor shall enjoy or may rely upon any immunities or defenses, or any subset thereof, which are only available to government actors, including but not limited to (1) qualified immunity; (2) sovereign immunity; (3) prosecutorial immunity; and (4) any immunity provided to the State,

political subdivisions, or public employees by statute.

Remedies for constitutional violations by government actors under this Amendment include any or all of the following relief: (1) compensation for economic and non-economic damages, without limitation; (2) equitable or injunctive relief; (3) recovery of reasonable attorney's fees, regardless of whether the attorney provided services on an hourly, contingent, or pro bono basis; and (4) any other remedies prescribed by State or federal law or available pursuant to common law. In addition to the relief awarded to the person bringing the action under this Amendment, the court shall order any government actor found liable for the deprivation of a person's constitutional rights to take reasonable measures to prevent a similar rights violation from re-occurring.

A finding of liability against a public employee under this Amendment is just cause for termination of the employment, agreement, or contract giving rise to the public employee's status as a public employee.

The private cause of action created by this Amendment may be tried before the bench or a jury, at the election of the person bringing the action pursuant to this Amendment, but in either case all violations must be proven by a preponderance of evidence. A claim made under this Amendment must be commenced no later than six years from the date that the deprivation of a constitutional right is alleged to have occurred.

All claims must be commenced no later than six years from the date the alleged constitutional violation is alleged to have occurred. All provisions of this Amendment shall be self-executing and severable. This Amendment shall take effect on January 1, 2025.

CERTIFICATION OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

This certification of the Attorney General, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code §3519.01(A), will be inserted when it is provided. This initial petition must be submitted with at least one thousand (1,000) valid signatures of Ohio electors before the Attorney General will issue that certification.

COMMITTEE TO REPRESENT THE PETITIONERS

The following persons are designated as committee to represent the petitioners in all matters relating to the petition or its circulation:

Cynthia Brown	2692 Arcola Road, Columbus, Ohio 43207
Carlos Buford	2130 Della Drive, Dayton, Ohio 45417
Derrick Jamison	3015 Hackberry Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45206
Hamza Khabir	26 Gould Avenue, Bedford, Ohio 44146
Jenny Sue Rowe	3340 Peterson Road, Mansfield, Ohio 44903

FULL TEXT OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Be it Resolved by the People of the State of Ohio that Article I of the Ohio Constitution is hereby amended to add the following Section:

Section 22. Protecting Ohioans' Constitutional Rights

(A) Definitions

- (1) "State" means the State of Ohio, including, but not limited to, the offices of all elected state officers and all departments and other instrumentalities of the State of Ohio.
- (2) "Political subdivision" means any body corporate or politic responsible for governmental activities within a geographic subsection of the State, including but not limited to a municipal corporation, township, county, or school district.
- (3) "Public employee" means:
 - (a) any individual who is an officer, agent, employee, or servant, of the State or a political subdivision, whether or not compensated or full time or part-time, who is authorized to act and is acting within the scope of the officer's, agent's, employee's, or servant's employment by the State or political subdivision; or
 - (b) any individual or business entity that is an independent contractor of the State or a political subdivision who is authorized to act and is acting under the color of law.
- (4) "Government actor" means the State, any political subdivision thereof, or any public employee of the State or of any political subdivision thereof.
- (5) "Person" means any individual resident of Ohio or individual within the State.
- (6) "Constitutional right" means any right, privilege or immunity secured pursuant to the constitution of Ohio.
- (7) "Business entity" means an entity with employees that is a corporation, association, firm, limited liability company, partnership, sole proprietorship, or other entity engaged in business.

(B) Claim for Deprivation of Rights Guaranteed by the Constitution of Ohio

- (1) No government actor shall cause any person to be subjected to deprivation of any constitutional right.
- (2) A person who claims to have suffered a deprivation of any constitutional right due to acts or omissions of any government actor or actors may bring a civil action against said government actor or actors.
- (3) Ohio's Courts of Common Pleas have subject matter jurisdiction over the civil action created by this Section.
- (4) Venue over the civil action created by this Section shall be determined by Ohio's venue laws and rules that are applicable to civil actions.

(C) Immunity Defenses Prohibited

- (1) In any action pursuant to this Section, no government actor shall enjoy or may rely upon any immunities or defenses which are only available to government actors or any subset thereof, including but not limited to:
 - (a) Qualified immunity;

- (b) Sovereign immunity;
- (c) Prosecutorial immunity; or
- (d) Any immunity provided to the State, political subdivisions, or public employees by statute.

(D) Determination Of Liability

- (1) The person bringing an action pursuant to this Section may elect whether the action will be tried in a bench trial or jury trial.
 - (a) In a bench trial, the court's decision on any claim brought hereunder shall be supported by findings of facts and conclusions of law.
 - (b) In a jury trial, any party may submit interrogatories to the jury asking for its findings of fact and application of the court's instructions as to the law.
- (2) Any government actor is liable for the deprivation of a person's constitutional rights if it is proven by a preponderance of evidence that the government actor's acts or omissions caused the person to be deprived of any constitutional right.
- (3) In addition, if a public employee is found liable for the deprivation of a person's constitutional rights pursuant to subsection (D)(2), and it is proven by a preponderance of evidence that the public employee was acting on behalf of, under color of, or within the course or scope of authority granted by the State or political subdivision, then the State or political subdivision shall be held liable to that person for the conduct of the public employee.
- (4) Terminating a public employee shall not affect the liability of the State or political subdivision for the terminated public employee's conduct.

(E) Remedies Upon A Determination Of Liability

- (1) If a government actor is found liable for the deprivation of a person's constitutional rights, that person shall be entitled to any or all of the following relief:
 - (a) Compensation for economic and non-economic damages, without limitation;
 - (b) Equitable or injunctive relief;
 - (c) Recovery of reasonable attorney's fees, regardless of whether the attorney provided services on an hourly, contingent, or pro bono basis; and
 - (d) Any other remedies prescribed by State or federal law or available pursuant to common law.
- (2) In addition to the relief awarded to the person, the court shall order any government actor found liable for the deprivation of a person's constitutional rights to take reasonable measures to prevent a similar rights violation from re-occurring.

(F) Statute of Limitations

- (1) A claim made under this Section shall be commenced no later than six years from the date that the deprivation of a constitutional right is alleged to have occurred.

(G) Termination of Contract, Agreement, or Employment

- (1) A finding of liability against a public employee pursuant to this Section is just cause for termination of the employment, agreement, or contract giving rise to the public employee's status as a public employee.

(H) Severability Clause

(1) All provisions of this section shall be self-executing and severable.

(I) Effective Date

(1) This section shall take effect on January 1, 2025.