



DAVE YOST

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September 30, 2019

By e-mail and regular U.S. Mail

The Honorable Benjamin C. Glassman
United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio
303 Marconi Blvd # 200
Columbus, OH 43215

The Honorable Justin Herdman
United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio
United States Court House
801 West Superior Avenue; Suite 400
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-1852

Dear U.S. Attorneys Glassman and Herdman:

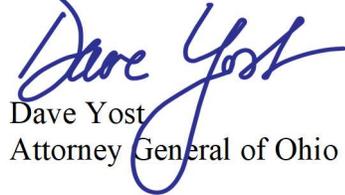
As you are likely aware, a committee of Ohioans is currently circulating petitions that seek signatures in support of a referendum to repeal Ohio's recently-enacted House Bill 6. Circulating petitions and gathering to solicit signatures are the exact types of public participation in the political process upon which our government is founded. And, these activities are protected by the First Amendment. Yet, I have read with great concern recent media and online reports of petition circulators being targeted, harassed and intimidated by individuals opposed to the referendum effort. This activity must stop and I intend to use this Office's resources to protect the integrity of the petition process.

Ohio law gives the Attorney General the authority to present evidence to the county prosecutor and initiate criminal proceedings for election fraud as it pertains to the referendum process where appropriate. This may include the authority to initiate criminal charges against any person who uses threats or intimidation to influence another not to sign or circulate a petition. Today, I publicly announced a process that members of the public can use to report to the Ohio Attorney General's Office instances of petition-blocking. This Office will follow up on these reports and, if appropriate, pursue criminal charges against the offenders.

I am bringing this effort to your attention because it may ultimately overlap with your jurisdiction. That is, federal law makes it a crime for two or more persons to conspire to injure, oppress, threaten

or intimidate any person in the free exercise of any right secured by the U.S. Constitution, including the right to circulate petitions. In the event that Ohio's effort uncovers any activity that constitutes a violation of federal law, we will share that information with you and provide whatever assistance that you might request. Similarly, if you or other federal agencies are conducting investigations regarding activities of this nature, you will have our full cooperation to avoid duplication of scarce resources. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Yours,



Dave Yost
Dave Yost
Attorney General of Ohio