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***For Immediate Release***

# **NO ON ISSUE 1: Ohio Manufacturers' Association Urges Ohioans to Oppose Proposed State Constitutional Amendment**

COLUMBUS, Ohio – Today the Ohio Manufacturers' Association (OMA) urged Ohioans to vote “NO” on Issue 1, a proposed state constitutional amendment on the Nov. 5 statewide ballot that would change the way that districts are created for the Ohio General Assembly and Ohio's 15 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The OMA raised concerns that Issue 1 would erode Ohioans' ability to directly impact how legislative and congressional districts are created, create confusion and resentment among voters and make it harder for minorities and historically underrepresented communities to be elected.

“After a lengthy, exhaustive process of review, consideration and debate, OMA leadership, comprised of manufacturing executives, came down soundly against Issue 1 and is urging Ohioans to oppose it. The current process is certainly one with flaws, but it's rooted in accountability, expertise and inclusivity, all characteristics that would be tossed out the window by Issue 1. We need to go forward, not backward, and the OMA urges Ohioans to say, ‘No,’ to this flawed proposal,” said OMA President Ryan Augsburger.

Over the past month, the OMA conducted a thorough review of proposed Issue 1. OMA leadership, comprised solely of manufacturing company executives, reviewed the current system for creating districts and the proposed changes to it, and they studied and

discussed a detailed analysis prepared by OMA's legal counsel. This internal deliberation was lengthy, thorough and genuine. Its outcome was not a foregone conclusion. After significant consideration, this process led to the decision that the OMA should urge Ohioans to oppose Issue 1 and should actively support efforts to defeat it.

Elements of Issue 1 that the OMA found particularly problematic include:

- **No expertise, no accountability:** The proposed ballot initiative would create a new government entity comprised of unelected people who are unaccountable to voters. The members of the new entity would be chosen by a complex, convoluted selection process that includes criteria giving priority to those without experience in Ohio government and political systems.
- **Control by nameless, faceless court staff:** The non-expert, unelected body would be assisted by "special masters" employed by the Supreme Court of Ohio. Inevitably these unelected Supreme Court employees would emerge as the real power in the process and steer the entity's outcomes according to their own beliefs and views, with no ability for Ohio voters to hold them accountable for their decisions or actions.
- **A silencing of minority voices:** Criteria laid out in the proposal for how to create legislative and congressional districts would have the effect of making it harder for racial minorities to be elected to the General Assembly or one of Ohio's 15 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. This is exactly what happened in Michigan, which approved a similar 13-member independent commission and process. Three federal judges ruled that more than 12 state legislative districts in the Detroit area were inappropriately racially gerrymandered to the disadvantage of minority candidates and voters. In fact, it is questionable if Ohio's three African American members of Congress would have been elected to their seats if Issue 1 had been in effect during Ohio's last general election. At a time when Ohio and the nation should be seeking to reduce political divisiveness, Issue 1 would be a step backward and lead to more division and polarization.
- **A solution worse than the problem:** While the existing process for drawing districts is controversial, it was created by elected officials and mandates representation and inclusion of members of the minority political party. Ohio voters seeking to change this process have absolute freedom to seek change by changing their elected leaders and replacing them with new, different ones, either from the same political party or another. The OMA has its own concerns about the current process for creating districts and would encourage leaders to review it and seek changes that foster increased competition. However, replacing the current system with one that is permanently beyond the reach of voters to change, and which is in the hands of unelected non-experts controlled behind the scenes by nameless, faceless staff of the Supreme Court of Ohio, is a step backward and creates a worse situation than the current one.

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*The Ohio Manufacturers' Association is Ohio's largest statewide business association comprised solely of manufacturers. Established in 1910, the OMA's mission is to protect and grow Ohio manufacturing. It represents manufacturers of all sizes in every subsector of the industry. Manufacturing is Ohio's largest economic sector, employing approximately [690,000 Ohioans](#) and contributing more than [\\$133 billion](#) annually to the economy. Visit [ohiomfg.com](http://ohiomfg.com), or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [YouTube](#).*