

Oppose H.J.R. 43: Stop the Anti-Democratic Measure in Missouri

Missouri legislators are now considering H.J.R. 43, introduced by Representative Mike Dethrow, which proposes a constitutional amendment to require a two-thirds majority for passage of ballot initiatives related to wildlife, rather than the simple majority that is currently required for all ballot questions.

- **H.J.R. 43 creates an unfair standard for wildlife initiatives.** This legislation makes passage of ballot questions to reduce or eliminate unfair hunting and trapping practices extremely difficult, even if a majority of Missouri citizens supported them. The resolution sets a different standard for wildlife measures—requiring a win of two-thirds compared to a simple majority for all other measures. Additionally, H.J.R. 35 would only require a simple majority to overturn any wildlife initiatives passed before enactment of this law.
- **H.J.R. 43 targets humane-minded voters.** Missouri voters decide issues as diverse as education, campaign and election regulations, taxes, creation of new counties, gambling, and the judicial system, but the two-thirds requirement would not apply to any of those issues.
- **H.J.R. 43 is undemocratic.** The use of issue-based initiatives after other means of effecting reform have been exhausted is an essential part of the delicate system of checks and balances created in the Missouri constitution. Voters need to ability to make reforms have after legislators and executive agencies failed to take appropriate actions.
- **Similar measures were overwhelmingly rejected by voters in other states.** Proposition 201 sought to amend the Arizona Constitution to create a two-thirds majority to pass any initiative to protect wildlife and to restrict hunting or trapping. Even though hunting groups outspent animal protection advocates seven to one, voters rejected Proposition 201 with a 63% "no" vote in November 2000. In Alaska, there was a measure on the ballot to amend the constitution to forbid any citizen initiatives to restrict hunting or trapping. Voters rejected that measure with a 64% "no" vote. The Alaska and Arizona measures only served as sinkholes for the dollars of hunters and hunting organizations who backed these ill-conceived and unpopular measures.