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Four Powers on the Chopping Block

A group of Ohio citizens isn't leaving the maintenance of ethical standards in government to the politicians. Smart. Forming a political committee, "Ethics First — You Decide Ohio," the group filed an initiative to amend the state constitution unsurprisingly called, "Ethics First."

What does the ballot measure do?

"Ethics proposal would cut state lawmaker's pay and power," said the segment on Cleveland's NBC affiliate, WKYC-TV 3.



The initiative limits base pay for the state's part-time legislators to the median household income of full-time Ohioans. Because Ohio is one of only six states in which legislators pay themselves more than median household income, the measure, if in effect today, would mandate cutting legislators' base pay from \$60,584 annually to \$49,644.

"The purpose is not to cut their pay," explained spokesman Jack Boyle. "The purpose is to make their pay related to what happens to all of us in Ohio. If we're doing well, their pay will go up. If not, it will go down."

What legislative "power" will be cut?

The amendment takes away four powers:

- (1) The power of legislators to exempt themselves from laws and taxes other Ohioans must follow and pay,
- (2) The currently unlimited power of legislators to raise their own pay,
- (3) The power to be a paid lobbyist before the legislature within two years of leaving office as a state legislator, and
- (4) The power of legislators to destroy legislative records, including electronic records, within four years.

All the other powers of the legislature remain completely intact.

How would you vote: Yes or No?

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

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