

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Supporters File Petitions for County Government Reform**

### **Another Step Toward Giving Voters an Opportunity to Express Their Voice on Reform**

**CLEVELAND- JULY 10, 2009** – More than 75,000 signatures of Cuyahoga County residents who support placing an issue on the ballot calling for reform of Cuyahoga County government were filed with the Board of Elections today.

“The public’s enthusiasm for this much needed-reform is strong and deep,” said Judy Rawson, former mayor of Shaker Heights who is helping to lead the effort. “We had little trouble getting signatures. People are tired of inefficiency—they want a county government that is designed to work better and work smarter with less waste.”

Martin Zanotti, Parma Heights mayor, said “Today is the first step in giving the voters in Cuyahoga County the opportunity to assure that our county government works for them in the future. We have much work to do and look forward to presenting our principles of the reform to the voters over the next several months.”

While the number of signatures exceeds the 45,000 signatures limit required to get the issue on the November ballot, it is expected that additional signatures will be needed by the September deadline. Reform supporters thus will continue to collect signatures.

Bill Mason, County Prosecutor, said, “We expect that we will need more signatures but today is a positive step toward putting this charter on the ballot. By restructuring county government, we will make it more efficient and put our region in a better position to drive economic development and create jobs.”

The new structure being offered would replace the existing three county commissioners—who now serve as both the executive and legislative branches—with an elected county executive and an 11-member, elected county council. All parts of the county would be equally represented.

In addition, a reformed county government would place a much-needed emphasis on job creation and economic development. A regional advisory group—with representatives appointed by the mayor of Cleveland, the business community, organizes labor and the county council—would guide this effort.

The county treasurer, recorder and auditor would be consolidated under a single fiscal officer. Efficiencies and cost savings would be realized by consolidating and professionally managing personnel, purchasing and information systems—which are now often operated in duplicative fashion by each elected office.

Another important function of county government—providing health and human services—would also be a chief focus area of the reformed government.

Organizations that assisted with the collection of the signatures for the petitions calling for the ballot issue included the League of Women Voters, students from Shaker Heights High School, Cleveland City council members and other interested groups and individuals.

For more information, go to [www.newcuyahoga.com](http://www.newcuyahoga.com)

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