

# States with Citizen Initiatives - 2023

## The Initiative Process Defined:

[https://www.lgbtmap.org/democracy-maps/direct\\_citizen\\_initiative\\_states](https://www.lgbtmap.org/democracy-maps/direct_citizen_initiative_states)

The initiative process is a tool through which citizens can propose statutes or constitutional amendments to be put on the ballot in their state. Often referred to generally as ballot measures, the initiative process can be direct or indirect depending on the state. (An [initiative](#) is a means through which any citizen or organization may gather a predetermined number of signatures to qualify a measure to be placed on a ballot, and to be voted upon in a future election (These may be further divided into [constitutional amendments](#) and [statutory initiatives](#). Statutory initiatives typically require fewer signatures to qualify to be placed on a future ballot. [Wikipedia](#))

**Direct citizen initiatives** are *put onto the ballot without involvement from the state legislature* if they meet certain qualifications, usually related to signature gathering and subject matter, as well as various deadlines.

**Indirect citizen initiatives** are *submitted to the state legislature, which can then approve the measure without it going to the ballot, not adopt the measure, or even submit a competing measure. (Further: If the legislative body elects not to pass the proposed new law within a prescribed window of opportunity, the initiative must then be placed on the ballot. The details of the process vary by state. For example, in some states, another round of signatures is required to qualify an initiative for the ballot if the legislature does not approve it. In others, if the legislature passes a law determined to be substantially similar to the initiative, it precludes an election on the original initiative proposal, while in others the legislature must pass the initiative unaltered or it goes to the voters. [Wikipedia](#))*

**Each state has individual requirements to qualify initiatives for the ballot. Generally, all 24 states and the District of Columbia follow steps similar to:**

1. File a proposed petition with a designated state official
2. State review of the proposal and, in several states, a review of the language of the proposal
3. Prepare ballot title and summary
4. Petition circulation to obtain the required number of signatures
5. Petition submitted to state election officials to verify the signatures and qualify the ballot entry

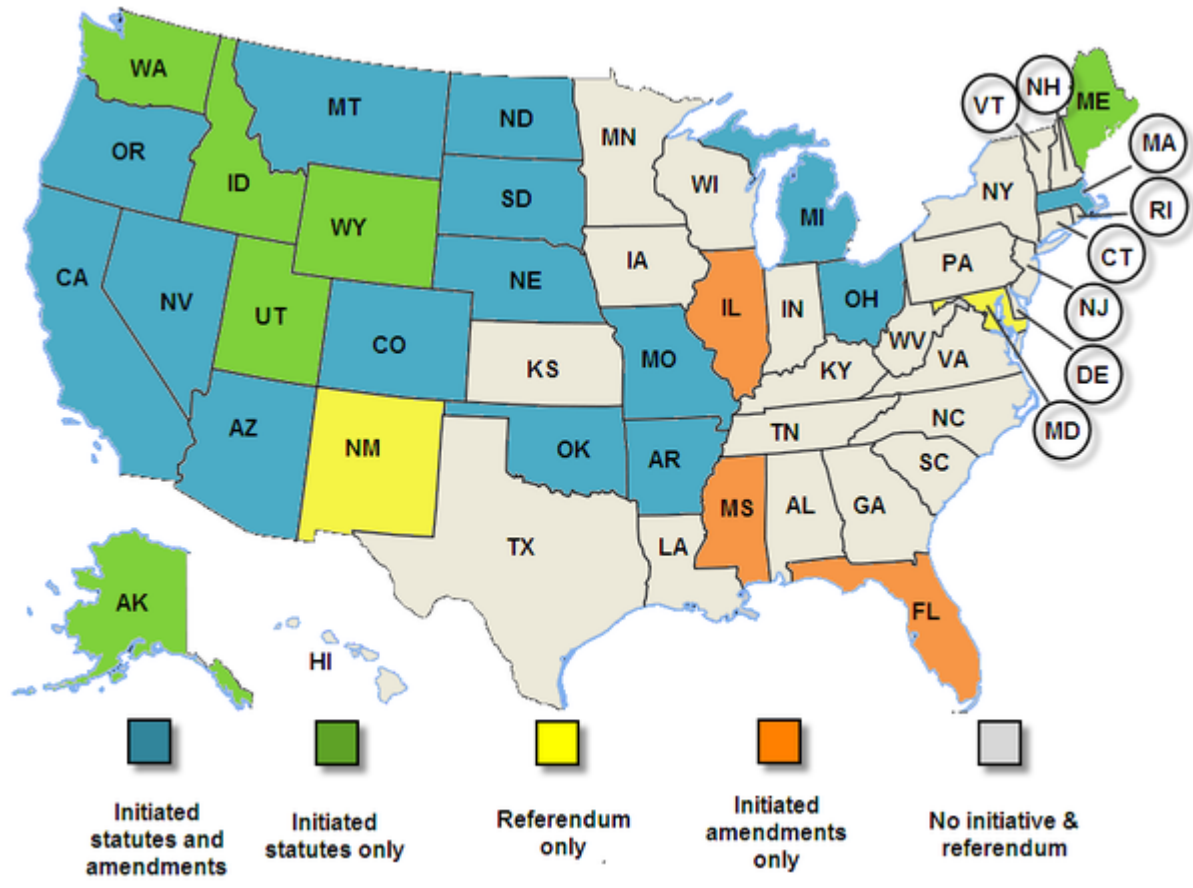
Twenty-six **states** have **initiative** and/or **veto referendum** processes at the statewide level. **Washington, D.C.**, also has **initiative** and **referendum processes**. The availability of the powers at the local level varies by jurisdiction depending on **state and local laws**.

[https://ballotpedia.org/States\\_without\\_initiative\\_or\\_referendum](https://ballotpedia.org/States_without_initiative_or_referendum)

## **States without initiative or referendum**

Twenty-four states do not feature a process for citizen-initiated measures—**ballot initiatives** or **veto referendums** at the statewide level. In some of these states, however, lower-level jurisdictions do feature processes for local initiatives or veto referendums. Below is a list of those states that do not feature the power of initiative and referendum.

- Alabama
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Kansas
- Louisiana
- Minnesota
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Vermont
- Virginia
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin



## Chart of powers in each state

The chart below lists the 26 states with the power of initiative or referendum, shows what powers—initiated statute, initiated amendment, veto referendum, or some combination—are available to the people in that state. It also shows the signature requirement for each type of measure as of the 2023/2024 election cycle. The chart does not differentiate between different types of initiated statute or initiated amendment, such as between direct or indirect initiatives. Read details about the process in each state by clicking the links in the chart.

State	Constitutional	Signatures	Statute	Signatures	Referendum	Signatures
Alaska	✘	N/A	✔	26,705	✔	26,705
Arizona	✔	383,923	✔	255,949	✔	127,975
Arkansas	✔	90,704	✔	72,563	✔	54,422
California	✔	874,641	✔	546,651	✔	546,651
Colorado	✔	124,238	✔	124,238	✔	124,238
Florida	✔	891,589	✘	N/A	✘	N/A
Idaho	✘	N/A	✔	60,371	✔	60,371
Illinois	✔	328,371	✘	N/A	✘	N/A
Maine	✘	N/A	✔	67,682	✔	67,682
Maryland	✘	N/A	✘	N/A	✔	60,157
Massachusetts	✔	74,490	✔	74,490	✔	37,245
Michigan	✔	446,198	✔	356,958	✔	223,099
Mississippi	✔	106,190	✘	N/A	✘	N/A

Missouri	✔	171,592	✔	107,246	✔	107,246
Montana	✔	60,359	✔	30,179	✔	30,179
Nebraska	✔	126,838	✔	88,787	✔	63,419
New Mexico	✘	N/A	✘	N/A	✔	71,475
Nevada	✔	102,362	✔	135,561	✔	102,362
North Dakota	✔	31,164	✔	15,582	✔	15,582
Ohio	✔	413,488	✔	124,046	✔	248,093
Oklahoma	✔	172,993	✔	92,263	✔	57,664
Oregon	✔	156,231	✔	117,173	✔	78,115
South Dakota	✔	35,017	✔	17,509	✔	17,509
Utah	✘	N/A	✔	132,721	✔	132,721
Washington	✘	N/A	✔	324,516	✔	162,258
Wyoming	✘	N/A	✔	29,730	✔	29,730

# Signature requirements and deadlines by state

Click on the links below to read about signature requirements and deadlines for ballot initiatives in each state.

- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Alaska](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Arizona](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Arkansas](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in California](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Colorado](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Florida](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Idaho](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Illinois](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Maine](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Maryland](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Massachusetts](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Michigan](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Mississippi](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Missouri](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Montana](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Nebraska](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Nevada](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in New Mexico](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in North Dakota](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Ohio](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Oklahoma](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Oregon](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in South Dakota](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Utah](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Washington](#)
- [Signature requirements for ballot measures in Wyoming](#)

## **Initiated state statute**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Initiated\\_state\\_statute](https://ballotpedia.org/Initiated_state_statute)

An **initiated state statute** is a **citizen-initiated ballot measure that amends state statute (state law)**. Of the 26 states that provide some form of initiative, 21 states allow for citizens to initiate state statutes.

Seven of the 21 states provide for indirect, but not direct, citizen-initiated state statutes. An **indirect initiated state statute** goes to the legislature after a successful signature drive. The legislatures in these states have the option of approving the initiative themselves, rather than the initiative appearing on the ballot. In Utah and Washington, citizens can use either a direct or indirect initiated state statute."

Twenty-one states allow citizens to propose new state statutes via initiative:

- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Idaho
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- Nevada
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- South Dakota
- Utah
- Washington
- Wyoming

## **Initiated Constitutional Amendment**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Initiated constitutional amendment](https://ballotpedia.org/Initiated_constitutional_amendment)

An **initiated constitutional amendment** is an amendment to a state's **constitution** that comes about through the **initiative** process.

Of the **26 U.S. states** that have some degree of **direct democracy**, eighteen (18) of them have a provision for initiated constitutional amendments.

Arizona  
Arkansas  
California  
Colorado  
Florida  
Illinois  
Massachusetts  
Michigan  
Mississippi  
Missouri  
Montana  
Nebraska

Nevada  
North Dakota  
Ohio  
Oklahoma  
Oregon  
South Dakota

## **Indirect initiated state constitutional amendment**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Initiatives\\_and\\_referendums\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Initiatives_and_referendums_in_the_United_States)

The initiative process, for proposing constitutional amendments, may also, like for state statutes, be "direct" or "indirect". Among the 18 states that provide for citizen-initiated constitutional amendments, Massachusetts and Mississippi are the only two states with indirect initiated state constitutional amendment.

In [Massachusetts](#), if enough signatures are submitted for an initiated constitutional amendment, **the initiative first goes to the legislature** *where it must garner approval in two successive legislative sessions from one-quarter of state senators and representatives voting together in a joint session*. Massachusetts is the only state to have such a requirement for initiated constitutional amendments.

Before 2021 in [Mississippi](#), if enough signatures were collected and submitted, **the legislature had to either**: *approve the measure; ignore the measure (but it does not annul the measure, it still goes to the ballot); voting against the measure without providing for an alternative (but it does not annul the measure, it still goes to the ballot); or approve an alternative amendment to appear on the ballot alongside the original citizen proposal as a competing measure*. In the cases when both of the contradicting measures were approved by voters, the measure with the most votes was the one that became law.

A May 2021 decision by the Mississippi Supreme Court nullified a voter-passed initiative that permitted medical marijuana in the state, with the 6–3 majority citing a fundamental flaw in the state's constitutional process that was viewed by media as effectively banning future use of indirect initiatives in the amendment process, barring a future constitutional amendment. . .

At the time the indirect initiative process passed, Mississippi had five congressional districts, but the state lost one House seat in the reapportionment that followed the [2000 United States Census](#). In the majority decision, Justice Josiah Coleman wrote, "Whether with intent, by oversight, or for some other reason, the drafters of section 273(3) wrote a ballot-initiative process that cannot work in a world where Mississippi has fewer than five representatives in Congress. To work in today's reality, it will need amending—something that lies beyond the power of the Supreme Court."



## Veto Referendum

[https://ballotpedia.org/Veto\\_referendum](https://ballotpedia.org/Veto_referendum)

A **veto referendum** is a type of citizen-initiated **ballot measure that asks voters whether to uphold or repeal a law passed by the state legislature, a city council, a county board of supervisors, or some other legislative body**. This type of ballot measure is also called *citizen referendum*, *statute referendum*, *statute remand*, *popular referendum*, *people's veto*, or *citizen's veto*.

There are 23 states that have a process for veto referendums at the statewide level. Availability of the veto referendum power at the local level varies.

*In most states that allow the [veto referendum](#), if petitioners collect enough signatures to force the matter onto their state's ballot within a certain amount of time, the targeted law does not go into effect when it otherwise would have done so. Rather, the law is suspended pending the outcome of the statewide vote. However, in some states, petitioners can still force the issue to a vote but the law will have gone into effect before the statewide vote is held. In certain states, there are two different signature requirements: a higher requirement to both suspend the law and send it to the ballot and a lower requirement to send the targeted law to the ballot without suspending it.*

(From: **Initiatives and referendums in the United States**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Initiatives\\_and\\_referendums\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Initiatives_and_referendums_in_the_United_States)):

## Statute affirmation

Nevada is the only state to allow for statute affirmation. The statute affirmation allows the voters to collect signatures to place on ballot a question asking the state citizens to affirm a standing state law. If a majority of state citizens vote to affirm the law, the state legislature will be barred from ever amending the law, and it can be amended or repealed only if approved by a majority of state citizens in a direct vote

## Citizens' Initiative Review

Healthy Democracy, (an) organization in Washington State, proposed a Citizens' Initiative Review process. This brings together a representative cross-section of voters as a citizens' jury to question and hear from advocates and experts regarding a ballot measure; then deliberate and reflect together to come up with statements that support and/or oppose the measure. The state would organize such a review of each ballot measure, and include the panelists'

statements in the voters' pamphlet. Since 2009, Healthy Democracy has led efforts to develop and refine the Citizens' Initiative Review process for use by Oregon voters.

In 2011, the Oregon Legislature approved House Bill 2634, legislation making the Citizens' Initiative Review a permanent part of Oregon elections. This marked the first time a legislature has made voter deliberation a formalized part of the election process. The CIR is a benchmark in the initiative reform and public engagement fields.

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## **Laws Governing the Initiative Process By State:**

### **Alaska**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Alaska](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Alaska)

**Statute (Indirect): 26,705 - Referendum: 26,705**

Citizens of [Alaska](#) may [initiate](#) legislation through the process of [indirect initiative](#). In Alaska, successful petitions are first presented to the [Alaska State Legislature](#). If the measure (or an equivalent measure) is not adopted, the law is then placed before voters. In Alaska, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). Alaska residents may not [amend their constitution via initiative](#) or [directly initiate legislation](#). The [Alaska State Legislature](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) or [legislatively referred state statutes](#).

In Alaska, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation.

In Alaska, each proposed measure must cover **only one subject**. Such laws are also known as [single-subject rules](#).

**Subject Restrictions:** Petitioners in Alaska may not propose legislation on certain subjects. Initiated laws may not: Dedicate revenues / Make or repeal appropriations / Create courts / Define the jurisdiction of courts or prescribe their rules / Enact local or special legislation

**Applying to Petition:** Alaska is one of several states that requires a certain number of signatures to accompany petition applications. The signatures of at least **100 qualified voters** who will serve as [sponsors](#) of the ballot measure are required. Along with the signatures, proponents must file a copy of the proposed bill and designate three sponsors to serve as the initiative committee representing the other sponsors. Sponsors must be people who are qualified to vote in Alaska. Proponents must file the application with the [lieutenant governor's](#) office and pay a deposit.

Alaska **requires** that petition circulators **reside in the state**. *Several similar laws in other states have been overturned, but the [US Supreme Court](#) has yet to rule on the matter.*

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Alaska State Legislature](#) may not repeal a measure for two years following its passage. However, lawmakers can amend the initiated law at any time by a simple majority vote.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Alaska does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** Signatures equal to 7 percent of the total district vote in the last general election must be collected in each of three-fourths of the 40 [Alaska House](#) districts.

**Effective Date:** Once approved by voters, an initiative becomes law after 90 days.

### **Alaska Deadlines:**

Petitioners have one year to collect signatures. They must submit petitions within a year from the day the lieutenant governor has prepared the petitions for the sponsors of the initiative. Signatures must be submitted prior to the start of the legislative session in January. For referendums, signatures must be submitted 90 days after the end of the legislative session in which the law targeted by the referendum was passed.

In Alaska, once signatures are verified, the issue must be prepared for the very next statewide general, special, or primary election ballot at least 120 days after the adjournment of the legislative session following the submission of signatures.

## **Chapter 15.45 of Title 15 of the Alaska Statutes**

### **Initiatives:**

<https://law.justia.com/codes/alaska/2015/title-15/chapter-15.45/article-01/>

**Referendum:** <https://law.justia.com/codes/alaska/2015/title-15/chapter-15.45/article-02/section-15.45.250/>

**Recall:** <https://law.justia.com/codes/alaska/2015/title-15/chapter-15.45/article-03/section-15.45.470/>

## **Arizona**

**Petition Process:** [https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Arizona](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Arizona)

**Constitutional: 383,923 - Statute: 255,949 - Referendum: 127,975**

Citizens of [Arizona](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as either a [state statute](#) or [constitutional amendment](#). In Arizona, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [Arizona State Legislature](#) may place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) or [legislatively referred state statutes](#). In addition, the [Arizona Commission on Salaries for Elective State Officers](#) is one of only a few state committees that have the power to [place measures on the ballot](#).

The Arizona Constitution contains a **single-subject rule** for citizen-initiated ballot measures. Each proposed measure must cover only one subject. Such laws are also known as single-subject rules.

In Arizona, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation.

**Competing Initiatives:** The [Arizona Constitution](#) provides that in the event that two measures conflict, the measure with the most "yes" votes supersedes the other on any points of conflict. However, the other measure is not wholly superseded.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to collecting signatures, initiative proponents must file an application to petition with the [Arizona secretary of state](#). The application form, which is provided by the [secretary of state](#), must include the name(s) addresses of the proponent(s), a summary of the measure no more than 200 words in length and the text of the measure. In addition, the proponents must file a statement of organization, registering the political committee for campaign finance purposes.

Arizona **prohibits** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected.

**Supermajority:** Arizona requires a 60% vote to pass ballot measures to approve taxes. Arizona requires a simple majority for other ballot measures.

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Arizona State Legislature](#) may not repeal a successful initiative or referendum without voter approval. Lawmakers can amend the law, but only if the amendment "furthers the purposes" of the measure and passes with a 3/4 supermajority. The legislature can submit changes to previous initiatives to the voters through a [legislatively referred state statute](#).

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Arizona does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** Arizona does not have a distribution requirement. As such, any proportion of the required signatures may be collected from any county or congressional district. However, the political committee filing the petition is required to organize the signature sheets according to the county in which they were collected, by the person who collected the signatures and by the notary who notarized the circulator's signature.

**Effective Date:** Once the official canvass of votes is complete, the [Governor of Arizona](#) immediately issues a proclamation declaring successful measures to be law.

### **Arizona Deadlines:**

Petitioners have twenty-four months to collect signatures. Signatures must be filed four months before the election in which the measure would appear on the ballot. Signatures for veto referendums are due 90 days following the adjournment of the legislative session at which the targeted bill was approved.

*Article IX of the Arizona Constitution provides authority for the initiative and referendum process.* [https://ballotpedia.org/Article 4, Arizona Constitution#Part 1](https://ballotpedia.org/Article_4,_Arizona_Constitution#Part_1)

*Title 19 of the Arizona Revised Statutes governs the initiative and referendum process.* <https://www.azleg.gov/arsDetail/?title=19>

## **Arkansas**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws governing the initiative process in Arkansas](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Arkansas)

**Constitutional: 90,704 - Statute: 72,563 - Referendum: 54,422**

Citizens of [Arkansas](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as either a [state statute](#) or a [constitutional amendment](#). In Arkansas, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [Arkansas State Legislature](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) or [legislatively referred state statutes](#).

In Arkansas, veto **referendums can** be used on emergency legislation. The targeted emergency bill remains law unless rejected by voters at the election.

**Competing Initiatives:** The [Arkansas Constitution](#) provides that in the event that two measures conflict, the measure with the most "yes" votes will become law.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to collecting signatures, initiative proponents must submit a draft of the bill, a proposed ballot title, and a proposed popular name to the secretary of state. The secretary of state returns a copy to the petitioners, which begins the circulation window for the initiative.

Unlike with other initiative and referendum states, the ***approval of the petition happens after signatures are collected*** and submitted rather than before.

Arkansas **bans** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures gathered. Arkansas law requires circulators to reside in the state and to be citizens.

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Arkansas State Legislature](#) may not repeal or amend a successful initiative or referendum, except by a two-thirds supermajority vote.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Arkansas does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** Proponents must collect signatures equaling at least half of the designated percentage of gubernatorial votes in at least 15 of the state's counties. (1/2 of 10 percent = 5 percent for an amendment; 1/2 of 8 percent = 4 percent for a statute). For example, if 1,000 people voted for governor in a county and the petition is for a constitutional amendment, the signatures of 50 qualified electors would be required.

**Effective Date:** Unless specified by the measure itself, initiatives take effect 30 days after the election in which they are approved.

### **Arkansas Deadlines:**

In Arkansas, petitioners have an unlimited window in which to collect signatures. Signatures for initiated statutes and amendments must be filed four months before the election in which the measure is to appear on the ballot. Signatures for veto referendums must be submitted 90 days after the final adjournment of the legislative session during which the targeted bill was passed.

If enough submitted signatures are verified to put the petition at or above 75 percent of the required signatures, petitioners have an extra 30 days to collect supplementary signatures or prove invalidated signatures were actually valid.

*Article X of the Arkansas Constitution provides authority for the initiative and referendum process. [Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, Section 1](#)*

***Title 7 of the Arkansas Code governs the initiative and referendum process.***  
[Arkansas Code, Title 7](#)

## **California**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_California](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_California)

**Constitution: 874,641 - Initiative:546,651 - Referendum: 546,651**

Citizens of [California](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as either a [state statute](#) or a [constitutional amendment](#). In California, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [California State Legislature](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) or [legislatively referred state statutes](#). Referred amendments require a 2/3 vote of each.

In California, each proposed measure must address **only one subject**.

In California, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation.

If two or more measures **conflict**, the measure receiving the greatest number of affirmative votes supersedes the other.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to circulation, proponents must submit the full text of the measure to the California attorney general's Initiative Coordinator along with a request for a summary, contact information, a signed statement certifying that the proponents are qualified electors and a \$2,000 deposit, refundable upon qualification for the ballot. They must also sign and submit a statement promising not to use the signatures for any purpose except the initiative. **Public Review:** After the initiative is submitted, there must be a 30-day public review period in which citizens can give input and discuss the initiative. Proponents are allowed to alter the initiative according to suggestions and discussion.

California **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures. California **does not require** circulators to be state residents.

**Legislative Alteration:** The California State Legislature may not amend or repeal an approved measure without submitting the change to voters. However, a ballot measure may include a clause waiving this protection either entirely or conditionally.

Once ballot initiatives have been declared eligible for the ballot . . . The legislature has no control over the initiatives or whether they appear on the ballot. However, California law requires the legislature to hold a public hearing on the initiatives at least 30 days prior to the election. Moreover, proponents are allowed to withdraw an initiative even after it has been declared eligible for the ballot up to when the initiative is certified as

*qualified for the ballot" 131 days before the election. This means the legislature can offer alternative legislation as a compromise in an effort to convince petitioners to withdraw certified initiatives.*

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** California does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements: None**

**Effective Date:** In California, approved measures take effect on the fifth day after the secretary of state certifies election results, unless a different effective date is specified by the measure.

### **California Deadlines:**

Once petition sponsors have received the summary from the attorney general, they have 180 days to collect signatures and file their petitions. If sufficient signatures have been gathered, the measure is presented to voters at the next general election at least 131 days after the measure is certified for the ballot.

California signatures can be checked by random sampling or by a full count, depending on the outcome of the random sample check. If the signatures require a full check, the verification process will take additional time. In 2008, for example, the deadline for submitting signatures for the November ballot was April 21. However, if a full check was required, the operative deadline was in February. Given the uncertainties involved in the verification process, sponsors in California must allow time for the process as they plan their initiative campaign.[15]

Signatures for veto referendums must be submitted within 90 days of the enactment date of the targeted legislation.

*Article II of the California Constitution addresses initiatives.*

[https://ballotpedia.org/Article II, California Constitution](https://ballotpedia.org/Article_II,_California_Constitution)

***Division 9 of the California Elections Code governs initiatives.***

<https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codesTOCSelected.xhtml?tocCode=ELEC&tocTitle=+Elections+Code+-+ELEC>

## **Colorado**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws governing the initiative process in Colorado](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Colorado)

**Constitution: 124,238 - Statute: 124,238 - Referendum: 124,238**



Citizens of [Colorado](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as either a [state statute](#) or a [constitutional amendment](#). In Colorado, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [Colorado General Assembly](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) or [legislatively referred state statutes](#). Referred amendments require a 2/3 vote of each chamber.

In Colorado, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation.

In Colorado, each proposed measure must address **only one subject**.

Colorado law provides that in the event that two **conflicting measures** are approved, the measure with the most affirmative votes supersedes the other on any points of conflict. However, the other measure is not wholly superseded.

**Subject Restrictions:** Measures that can go on the ballot during odd years are limited to topics that concern taxes or state fiscal matters arising under TABOR, the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights

*[First Online Petition: In Boulder Colorado in 2021 the first official **online** petition system was used to get an initiative on the ballot, with no circulators involved: [www.petitions.bouldercolorado.gov](http://www.petitions.bouldercolorado.gov)]*

**Applying to petition:** Initiative proponents must submit the original text of the measure to the directors of the legislative council staff and the office of legal services for review and comment. Proponents must designate two people as those representing the proponents in all matters affecting the petition. . . The results of the review are presented in at least one public meeting. . . Once the proposed measure has been reviewed, the original, amended and final drafts must be filed with the [Colorado secretary of state](#). The secretary must then convene a "title board," which includes the [secretary of state](#), the [Colorado attorney general](#), and the director of the Office of Legislative Legal Services or the director's designee. At a public meeting, the board selects a title for the measure by majority vote. The title must be phrased in the form of a "yes" or "no" question.

Colorado had a law banning payments on a per-signature basis, but the **ban was overturned in court** as a violation of the First Amendment. Colorado **requires** that petition circulators are US citizens and residents of the state.

**Supermajority:** A [55 percent supermajority vote](#) for constitutional amendments, including both [initiated constitutional amendments](#) and [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#).

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Colorado General Assembly](#) may change or repeal initiated measures. In the case of initiated statutes, this only requires a simple majority. In the case of amendments, the Assembly must pass the amendment by a two-thirds

majority and place it on the ballot. (The same process required for ordinary [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#).)

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Colorado does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** 2 percent of the registered voters who live in each of the state's 35 senate districts for initiated constitutional amendments, with the requirement based on the senate district boundaries and the number of registered voters at the time the initiative petition is [approved for circulation](#).

**Effective Date:** Within 30 days of the canvass of votes, the [Governor of Colorado](#) will issue an official declaration of the results. All approved measures take effect on the day of this proclamation.

### **Colorado Deadlines:**

In Colorado, petitioners have six months to collect signatures after the ballot language and title are finalized. State statutes say a completed signature petition must be filed three months and three weeks before the election at which the measure would appear on the ballot. The Constitution, however, just says that the petition must be filed three months before the election at which the measure would appear. The secretary of state generally lists a date that is just three months before the election as the filing deadline.

Referendum signatures must be submitted 90 days following the adjournment of the legislative session at which the legislation targeted by the referendum was approved.

*Article V of the Colorado Constitution provides authority for the initiative and referendum process. [Colorado Constitution, Article V](#)*

*Title 1, Article 40 of the Colorado Revised Statutes governs the initiative and referendum process. [Colorado Revised Statutes, Title 1, Article 40](#)*

## **Florida**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Florida](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Florida)

**Constitution: 891,589**

Citizens of [Florida](#) may initiate [constitutional amendments](#) or call a [constitutional convention](#) via initiative. Florida residents may not [directly initiate legislation](#) or repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [Florida State Legislature](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#). Florida also has two commissions, the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission and **the Constitution**

**Revision Commission, which meet every 20 years and have the power to place amendments on the ballot.**

In Florida, each proposed measure must address **only one subject**, except measures "limiting the power of government to raise revenue."

**Word Count Limit:** If a joint resolution that proposes a constitutional amendment or revision contains only one ballot statement, the ballot summary may not exceed 75 words in length.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to collecting signatures, potential sponsors must register as a political committee for campaign finance purposes. The group must then submit the text of their proposed amendment and a proof copy of their petition form to the [secretary of state](#). . . Proposed measures are reviewed by the state attorney general and state supreme court after proponents collect 25 percent of the required signatures across the state in each of half of the state's congressional districts. After these preliminary signatures have been collected and proponents have submitted a ballot title and summary (initially approved by the secretary of state), the secretary of state must submit the proposal to the [Florida attorney general](#). The attorney general is required to petition the [Florida Supreme Court](#) for an advisory opinion on the measure's compliance.

Until 2019, Florida **allowed** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. Now banned.

Florida does **not require** petition circulators to be residents of the state.

**Supermajority:** Florida amendments require a 60 percent supermajority for approval. *(Soon to be almost 67% via legislative bill.)*

**Legislative Alteration:** Since [initiated constitutional amendments](#) are the only kind of ballot initiative permitted under Florida law, lawmakers must use the ordinary amendment process to overturn successful ballot measures. In order to place an amendment on the ballot, lawmakers in each chamber must pass a resolution with a three-fifths majority vote. The repeal/revision amendment must receive the usual 60 percent supermajority for passage.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Florida does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** Proponents must obtain signatures equaling at least 8 percent of the district-wide vote (in the most recent presidential election) in at least half of the state's 28 congressional districts.

**Effective Date:** Approved amendments take effect on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January following the election unless otherwise specified by the amendment.

### **Florida Deadlines:**

In Florida, signatures remain valid until February 1 of even-numbered years. Election officials have 60 days to complete signature verification, except that election officials have 30 days to complete signature verification if the signatures are submitted less than 60 days before February 1 of an even-numbered year. *(Before [Florida Senate Bill 1794](#) was signed into law in April 2020, signatures were valid for a period of two years.)*

“Constitutional amendments proposed by initiative shall be placed on the ballot for the general election, provided the initiative petition has been filed with the Secretary of State no later than February 1 of the year the general election is held. A petition shall be deemed to be filed with the Secretary of State upon the date the secretary determines that valid and verified petition forms have been signed by the constitutionally required number and distribution of electors under this code.”

*Article XI of the Florida Constitution provides authority for the initiative process. [Florida Constitution, Article XI](#)*

*Title IX of the Florida Statutes governs elections and electors. (A full list of legal references to the initiative process can be found [here](#).) [Florida Statutes, Title IX](#)*

### **Idaho**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Idaho](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Idaho)

**Statute: 60,371 - Referendum: 60,371**

Citizens of [Idaho](#) may only initiate legislation as a [state statute](#). Idahoans may also repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#), but cannot place a [constitutional amendment](#) on the ballot via initiative. The [Idaho State Legislature](#), on the other hand, may place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#).

Idaho law requires initiatives to "embrace only **one subject** and matters properly connected with it.

In Idaho, veto **referendums can** be used on emergency legislation.

Idaho law provides that in the event that two **conflicting measures** are approved, the measure with the most affirmative votes supersedes the other on any points of conflict. However, the other measure is not wholly superseded.

**Applying to Petition:** Idaho is one of several states that require a certain number of signatures to accompany petition applications. The signatures of **20 qualified electors** are required. Along with the signatures, proponents must file a copy of the proposal with the secretary of state. Once these requirements are met, the secretary transfers the proposal to the attorney general for review.

Petitioners must be a resident of Idaho. Idaho **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. *Idaho used to have a law banning paying signature gatherers on a per-signature basis, but a court struck this law down in 2001.* Idaho **requires** that petition circulators are residents of the state

**Legislative Alterations:** Idaho does not limit how soon, or with what majority, the legislature can repeal a measure.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Idaho does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** Idaho has a distribution requirement of 6 percent of the qualified electors at the time of the last general election in each of at least **18 of the state's 35 state legislative districts**, provided the total number of signatures is equal or greater than 6 percent of qualified electors in the state at the time of the last general election.

*(Idaho had a distribution requirement requiring 6 percent of the signatures from each of 22 of Idaho's 44 counties. This rule was struck down in 2001 by a federal court in [Idaho Coalition United for Bears v. Cenarrusa](#).<sup>[4]</sup> However, in 2013, the Idaho Legislature passed [Idaho Senate Bill 1108](#), which added geographic distributions requirements for signature collection based on state legislative districts.)*

The signatures must be collected from only one county per petition. Regarding the petition format, the designation of legislative districts must be marked "for official use only.

**Effective Date:** State law sets the earliest possible and the default effective date for statewide ballot initiatives to be July 1 in the year following the election. Initiatives can set effective dates that are later than July 1 of the following year.

### **Idaho Deadlines:**

In Idaho, petitioners have 18 months to collect signatures after the ballot title has been granted. Signatures may not be collected after April 30 of the year in which the measure would appear on the ballot. Signatures must be filed by the close of business on May 1 and cannot be collected after April 30.

*Article III of the Idaho Constitution provides authority for the initiative and referendum process. [Idaho Constitution, Article III, Section 1](#)*

*Title 34, Chapter 18 of the Idaho Statutes governs the initiative and referendum process. [Idaho Statutes, Title 34, Chapter 18](#)*

## **Illinois**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Illinois](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Illinois)

### **Constitution: 328,371**

Citizens of Illinois may only [initiate constitutional amendments](#). Citizens may not initiate [state statutes](#) or [veto referendums](#). The [Illinois General Assembly](#) may place [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) on the ballot with a three-fifths majority vote of each chamber.

Illinois does not have a single-subject rule.

Initiated measures in Illinois **may only amend** Article IV of the Illinois Constitution ["which rests the rights and responsibilities of the [Illinois General Assembly](#) (Legislature)]. In addition, they may only address "structural and procedural subjects contained in Article IV. . . (In 2016, an [initiated constitutional amendment](#) designed to [establish an independent redistricting commission](#) was [struck from the ballot](#) after proponents had submitted enough signatures to qualify it to go before voters. The initiative altered the duties and powers of the attorney general—as well as other officials—and prescribed a new way for challenging redistricting maps. The [Illinois Supreme Court](#) ruled that, while these issues are contained in Article IV of the state constitution, they did not constitute "structural and procedural subjects" and that, therefore, the initiative did not comply with the state's subject restriction.)

**Applying to Petition:** In Illinois, neither initiative applications nor draft petitions are required prior to circulation. No process exists for evaluating petition forms or amendment language prior to circulation. Petitions must contain the text of the amendment and the date of the general election.

Illinois **does not ban** paying circulators by the signature. Illinois **does not require** signature gatherers to be residents of the state.

**Supermajority:** In Illinois, all amendments must be approved by either (1) a majority of those voting in the election or (2) 3/5 of those voting on the amendment itself.

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Illinois General Assembly](#) may only repeal an initiated amendment by placing a repeal measure on the ballot, following the ordinary process

for [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#). Each chamber of the General Assembly must pass the amendment by a 3/5 majority. Voters must approve the measure by either (1) a majority of those voting in the election or (2) 3/5 of those voting on the amendment itself.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Illinois does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** None

**Effective Date:** Unless otherwise specified by the amendment itself, each amendment will take effect upon the declaration of results by the State Board of Elections.

### **Illinois Deadlines:**

In Illinois, no signatures may be collected earlier than 24 months prior to the general election. Signatures must be filed with the secretary of state no later than six months prior to the general election, leaving 18 months for circulation.

*Article XIV of the Illinois Constitution addresses initiatives. [Article XIV, Illinois Constitution](#)*

*The "Illinois Constitutional Amendment Act" (Illinois Compiled Statutes, 5 ILCS 20) primarily governs initiatives. [Illinois Compiled Statutes, 5 ILCS 20](#)*

## **Maine**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Maine](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Maine)

**Statute (Indirect): 67,682 - Referendum: 67,682**

Citizens of [Maine](#) may [initiate](#) legislation through the process of [indirect initiative](#). In Maine, successful petitions are first presented to the [Maine State Legislature](#). If the measure is not adopted without change or is vetoed by the [governor](#), the law is placed before voters. The legislature may submit "any amended form, substitute, or recommendation" to the people alongside the bill--this alternative is treated as a [competing measure](#). In Maine, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). Maine residents may not [amend their constitution via initiative](#) or [directly initiate legislation](#). The [Maine State Legislature](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) or [legislatively referred state statutes](#).

Maine **does not** employ a [single-subject rule](#).

In Maine, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation.



**Subject Restrictions:** A ballot initiative cannot "vacate and reverse a particular administrative decision" made by a government agency. According to the Supreme Judicial Court, ballot initiatives must be legislative, not executive, in nature. While legislation can define an agency's functions and authority, stated the court, legislation cannot interfere with an agency's executive power to make a decision.

**Competing Initiatives:** Maine law provides that in the event that two measures conflict, the ballot will be organized so that voters may select one of the measures or reject both, eliminating the possibility of both being approved by a majority. If no measure is approved by a majority of the voters casting a vote on both measures, then the measure that receives the most votes will be placed on the next statewide ballot within 60 days, provided it received approval from at least one-third of all the votes cast for or against the measures. The legislature may call a special election for this purpose.

**Applying to petition:** Prior to circulation, petitioners must file an application with the [secretary of state](#) along with the signatures of six voters. These voters will receive notices regarding the progress of the initiative. Along with the application, sponsors must include the full text of the law and a summary explaining the purpose of the initiative. After an application is submitted, the secretary of state must review the proposed law to ensure that it conforms to the secretary's formal requirements and the drafting conventions for statutes. If the secretary finds that a proposed statute does not meet these conditions, he or she will suggest a revised draft of the proposed bill. The secretary of state may ask for help from the Maine revisor of statutes. Sponsors may edit the petition according to the revised draft or the individual suggestions and reapply. The secretary of state may also modify the proposal with the permission of the sponsors. The final draft must receive written approval from the sponsors before going forward

Maine **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. *Maine used to have a law banning paying signature gatherers on a per-signature basis, but this law was struck down in 1999.*

Maine's state constitution and a 2015 law were designed to require that petition circulators are registered to vote in Maine, indirectly requiring them to be residents of the state. *A district court ruling in 2021 said state's voter registration and **residency requirement for petition circulators violated the right to political speech and blocked the enforcement of the law***

**Supermajority:** No requirements.

**Legislative Alteration:** Maine does not limit how soon, or with what majority, the legislature can repeal a measure.



**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Maine does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** None

**Effective Date:** Measures take effect 30 days after the Governor has proclaimed the results of the election. However, if there are insufficient state funds available for a measure and the initiated measure does not specify a sufficient funding source, the measure's effective date is delayed to allow the legislature to appropriate funds. Such measures take effect 45 days after start of the next legislative session.

### **Maine Deadlines:**

In Maine, signatures are valid for one year after the date they were signed. However, signatures may be collected up to 18 months after the petition form is furnished by the secretary of state. Signatures must be filed with the secretary by the 50th day of the first regular legislative session or the 25th day of the second regular session.

Signatures for [veto referendums](#) are due 90 days after the adjournment of the legislative session at which the targeted bill was passed.

*Article IV of the Maine Constitution provides authority for the initiative and referendum process. [Maine Constitution, Article IV, Part 3, Sections 17-22](#)*

*Title 21-A, Chapter 11 of the Maine Revised Statutes governs the initiative and referendum process. [Maine Revised Statutes, Title 21-A, Chapter 11](#)*

## **Maryland**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_referendum\\_process\\_in\\_Maryland](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_referendum_process_in_Maryland)

**Referendum: 60,157**

Citizens of [Maryland](#) may repeal any legislative act or part of an act via [veto referendum](#). Maryland does not feature the power of [initiative](#).

The [Maryland Constitution](#) forbids the use of the veto referendum power on any law "making any appropriation for maintaining the State Government, or for maintaining or aiding any public institution, *not exceeding the next previous appropriation for the same purpose.*"

In Maryland, veto **referendums can** be used on emergency legislation.

**Applying to Petition:** A draft of the petition form should be submitted prior to circulation to receive approval or technical suggestions from the [state board of elections](#).

**Supermajority:** A simple majority of the votes cast on the referendum is required to dictate the outcome.

**Distribution Requirements:** Of the signatures required to qualify a veto referendum question for the ballot, not more than half can be from residents of [Baltimore City](#) or any [one county](#).

**Effective Date:** If the referendum was on a non-emergency bill, which was halted from going into effect by the referendum petition, the law continues to be ineffective if voters reject it. If voters vote in favor of the referred law, it goes into effect 30 days after the election.

If the referendum targeted an emergency bill that already became effective, no change would be made by a majority vote in favor of the bill. Upon a majority vote against the bill, the law would be repealed effective 30 days after the election.

### **Maryland Deadlines:**

Signatures for a referendum petition against a legislative bill must be collected after the bill has been approved by the legislature.

Unless a bill is approved by a three-fifths supermajority in the legislature and labeled as an emergency bill, all bills passed by the legislature go into effect on the first day of June in the year following the legislative session in which the bill was passed.

For non-emergency bills, at least one-third of the required signatures, which amounts to a number equal to 1 percent of the votes cast in the last gubernatorial election, must be filed with the secretary of state by the first of June on which the bill would have gone into effect. If this is accomplished, petitioners have until June 30 to turn in the remaining two-thirds of the required signatures.

For emergency bills or bills passed less than 45 days before June 1, referendum petitioners have until 30 days after the bill is passed by the legislature to turn in the first one-third of required signatures. If this is accomplished, they have 30 more days to collect and submit the remaining two-thirds of the signatures.

[\*Maryland Constitution, Article XVI, Section 3 and Maryland State Statutes, Election Law, Section 6-209\*](#)

### **Massachusetts**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Massachusetts](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Massachusetts)

**Constitution (Indirect): 74,490 - Statute (Indirect): 74,490 -**

**Referendum: 37,245**

Citizens of [Massachusetts](#) may [initiate](#) legislation through the process of [indirect initiative](#). In Massachusetts, successful petitions are first presented to the [Massachusetts General Court](#). Once presented to the legislature, proposals for amendments and proposals for statutes face distinct requirements. Amendments must be approved by one-fourth of the legislators in two joint sessions before proceeding to the ballot. Statutes may be adopted by the legislature by a majority vote in both houses. If statute is not adopted, proponents must collect another, smaller round of signatures to place the statute on the ballot. In Massachusetts, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [Massachusetts General Court](#) can also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#).

[Massachusetts](#) law requires initiatives to concern only topics "which are related or which are mutually dependent." This rule is less restrictive than the full [single-subject rule](#) employed in many states.

In Massachusetts, veto **referendums can** be used on emergency legislation.

The [Massachusetts Constitution](#) provides that in the event that two **conflicting measures** are approved, the measure with the most affirmative votes supersedes the other on any points of conflict--the other measure is not wholly superseded.

**Restricted Subjects:** Measures may not propose laws regarding the following subjects:

Religion or religious institutions / Judges, judicial decisions, or courts / Laws that apply to particular cities/towns / Laws that make specific appropriations / The 18th Amendment (prohibition of alcohol) / Restricting rights found in the [Declaration of Rights](#)

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to circulation, petitioners must file a preliminary petition with the [attorney general](#). This petition includes the title and full text of the measure and the signatures of ten voters. In addition, each of the ten signers must provide documentation of their voter registration (a certificate of voter registration, signed by a majority of the members of the local board of registrars). Once the attorney general has reviewed the petition, proponents must submit the petition to the [secretary of the commonwealth](#). The secretary then drafts the official petition form and supplies it to the proponents.

Massachusetts **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. Massachusetts does not require petition circulators to be state residents.

**Supermajority:** Massachusetts initiatives, whether statutes or amendments, must receive a simple majority of the votes cast for or against them. Moreover, at least 30 percent of those casting a ballot in the election must vote in favor of the initiated measure.

**Legislative Alteration:** Massachusetts does not limit how soon, or with what majority, the legislature can repeal an initiated statute. Legislators can only overturn an amendment through the ordinary amendment process. . . only by a three-fourths supermajority vote called in the joint session. They may not amend proposed statutes.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** In Massachusetts, no measure may be proposed which is substantially the same as any measure that has been submitted to the people in either of the last two biennial state elections.

**Distribution Requirements:** In Massachusetts, no more than one-quarter of the certified signatures on any petition can come from a single county.

**Effective Date:** According to the [Massachusetts Constitution](#), initiated statutes "shall take effect in thirty days after such state election or at such time after such election as may be provided in such law." Courts have yet to fully clarify whether this means 30 days after the election or 30 days after the election results have been certified. However, within the text of the measure, petitioners may stipulate that the law take effect upon certification. Initiated amendments, on the other hand, take effect upon the certification of election results.

### **Massachusetts Deadlines:**

Signatures for initiated statutes in Massachusetts are collected in two circulation periods. The first period runs from the third Wednesday in September to two weeks prior to the first Wednesday in December.

The legislature must act on the petition by the first Wednesday of May. If the proposed law is not adopted, petitioners then have until the first Wednesday of July to request additional petition forms and submit the second round of signatures, a period of 8 weeks.

The signature deadline for initiated amendments is also the first Wednesday in December. Initiated amendments, however, do not require this second round of signatures, requiring a vote in two joint sessions of the legislature instead. Unlike with initiated statutes, one-quarter of the state legislature must approve the amendment in two joint sessions before it can be placed on the ballot. ***Since initiated constitutional amendments require approval by 25 percent of legislators in two sessions, initiated constitutional amendments go on the ballot a minimum of two years (and up to three years) after signatures are submitted.*** For example, an initiated constitutional amendment with signatures submitted in December 2016 would go before legislators in 2017 and 2018 and would go on the ballot in November 2018, while one with signatures submitted in December 2017 would go before the legislature in 2018 and 2019 and appear on the ballot in 2020.

## **Michigan**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Michigan](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Michigan)

**Constitution: 446,198 - Statute (Indirect): 356,958 - Referendum: 223,099**

Citizens of [Michigan](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as either an [indirectly initiated state statute](#) or a [directly initiated constitutional amendment](#). For statutes, if the petition receives enough valid signatures, then the state legislature has 40 days to adopt or reject the proposal. If the legislature rejects the law, then the measure is placed on the next general election ballot. For amendments, if the petition contains sufficient signatures, then the measure is placed directly on the next general election ballot. In addition, residents have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [Michigan State Legislature](#) can also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#).

Michigan **does not** have a [single-subject rule](#) for ballot initiatives.

**Subject Restrictions:** Citizens cannot initiate referendums against bills that included appropriations for state institutions or state funds.

In Michigan, veto **referendums can** be used on emergency legislation.

**Competing Initiatives:** In Michigan, when two ballot measures approved at the same election are in conflict, the measure with the most affirmative votes supersedes the other.

**Applying to Petition:** In Michigan, proponents of an initiative are required to file their measure with the secretary of state before collecting signatures. In Michigan, petitions for ballot initiatives need to follow a [specific format](#). Proponents have the option of submitting a draft petition to the Board of State Canvassers for approval or rejection based on formatting technicalities.

Michigan **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. Michigan does not require circulators to be residents of the state.

**Supermajority:** Michigan ballot measures do not require a supermajority for approval. This includes initiated statutes, initiated amendments, and referendums.

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Michigan State Legislature](#) may only change or repeal initiated statutes by a three-fourths supermajority vote in each house. In the case of amendments, the Legislature must pass an amendment by a two-thirds majority and

place it on the ballot -- the same process that is required for ordinary [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#).

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Michigan does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** The Michigan State Legislature approved and [Gov. Rick Snyder](#) (R) signed [Michigan House Bill 6595](#) on December 28, 2018. HB 6595 was designed to create a [distribution requirement](#) for initiative signature petitions in Michigan limiting the number of signatures collected in any one congressional district to 15 percent of the [total required](#). This would effectively require valid signatures from a minimum of seven different congressional districts for a successful initiative petition. This bill, however, was overturned by a court ruling. *"It would run directly contrary to the clear intention that **nothing more than a minimum number of signatures from the statewide population is necessary to propose changes to Michigan's laws.**"*

**Effective Date:** Approved statutes take effect 10 days after the official declaration of election results. Approved amendments take effect 45 days after the election date.

### **Michigan Deadlines:**

In Michigan, petitioners have 180 days to collect the required signatures for an initiated statute or an initiated constitutional amendment. Signatures older than 180 days at the time of filing are considered invalid. In addition, any signatures collected before a November election where a governor is elected, cannot be submitted after that election. Amendment petitions must be filed 120 days prior to the election. Petitions for statutes must be filed 160 days prior to the election, allowing the legislators 40 days to pass the proposed law.

Signatures for veto referendums are due 90 days following the final adjournment of the legislative session at which the targeted bill was passed.

**Constitution:** [Section 9 of Article II and Section 2 of Article XII of the Michigan Constitution](#) **provide for the initiative and referendum process in Michigan.**

**Statute:** [Section 168 of Michigan Election Code](#) provides **additional rules for the initiative and referendum process in Michigan.**

## **Mississippi**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Mississippi](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Mississippi)

**Constitution ("Obsolete"):** 106,190

(On May 14, 2021, the [Mississippi Supreme Court](#) overturned [Initiative 65](#), the 2020 medical marijuana initiative. The ruling stated that the initiative petition did not comply

with the signature [distribution requirements](#) in the [Mississippi Constitution](#) and **that it is impossible for any petition to meet the requirements and has been impossible since congressional reapportionment in 2001.**)

Citizens of [Mississippi](#) may [indirectly initiate constitutional amendments](#). Mississippi residents may not [directly initiate state statutes](#) or repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). Once a measure has collected enough signatures, the [Mississippi State Legislature](#) may choose to adopt the measure by a majority vote in each house. If the legislature rejects the measure, the proposed amendment proceeds to the ballot; the measure also goes to the ballot if the legislature approves the measure. Alternatively, the legislature may choose to approve an amended version of the measure. In this case, both measures will appear on the ballot together (See: [Competing initiatives](#) below for details). The [Mississippi State Legislature](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) with a 2/3 vote in each chamber.

Mississippi **does not** have a [single-subject rule](#) for ballot initiatives.

**Subject Restrictions:** Petitioners in Mississippi may not propose legislation on certain subjects. Initiated laws may not: Propose, modify, or repeal of any part of the State Bill of Rights / Amend or repeal any law or any provision of Mississippi Constitution relating to the Public Employees' Retirement System / Amend or repeal the Mississippi Constitution's right-to-work provisions / Modify the initiative process itself.

**Competing Initiatives:** If two conflicting measures are approved at a single election, the measure receiving more affirmative votes supersedes the other.

**Alternatives to citizen-initiated constitutional amendments:** Once a signature petition for an [initiated constitutional amendment](#) has been delivered to the [Mississippi State Legislature](#), lawmakers may choose to pass an amended version of the measure. In this case, both versions appear on the ballot. However, they are bracketed together and presented to voters in two unique questions. First, voters are asked to vote on whether they prefer **either of the measures** or **neither measure**. Second, voters are asked to vote on whether they prefer the **original measure** or the **legislative amendment**. Voters who chose "either of the measures" in the first question are required to vote on the second for their vote to count. Voters who vote for neither measure can, but need not, vote on the second question.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to collecting signatures, the initiative sponsor must file with the [secretary of state](#) a draft of the amendment text and an affidavit establishing that sponsor is a registered Mississippi voter. Once the secretary of state has received the original filing, he or she transmits the petition to the [attorney general](#) for review.



Mississippi **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. *Mississippi used to have a law banning paying signature gatherers on a per-signature basis, but this law was struck down in 1997 [Term Limits Leadership Council v. Clark](#).*

Mississippi **does not require** that petition circulators reside in the state. *It used to have such a ban, but this rule was struck down in 1997.*

**Supermajority:** In addition to requiring approval from a majority of the votes cast for or against the measure, Mississippi ballot measures must also receive affirmative votes equal to 40 percent of the total votes cast at the election. For example, if 100,000 residents cast ballots and 70,000 vote on a ballot question, at least 40,000 of those 70,000 must vote "yes" in order for the question to pass, even though 35,000 would constitute an ordinary simple majority. This condition applies to [initiated amendments](#) but does not apply to [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#), which can pass with simple majority approval of votes cast on the measure.

**Legislative Amendment:** Since only [initiated constitutional amendments](#) are permitted in Mississippi, lawmakers must follow the ordinary amendment process to overturn or amend successful ballot measures. In order to place an amendment on the ballot, lawmakers in each chamber must pass a resolution by a [two-thirds \(66.67 percent\) supermajority vote](#).

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** In Mississippi, initiatives cannot be re-attempted for at least two years from the election date.

**Distribution Requirements:** *It is impossible for any petition to meet the requirements and has been impossible since congressional reapportionment in 2001. ("Whether with intent, by oversight, or for some other reason, the drafters of [the constitutional signature distribution requirement] wrote a ballot initiative process that cannot work in a world where Mississippi has fewer than five representatives in Congress. To work in today's reality, it will need amending—something that lies beyond the power of the Supreme Court.")*

**Effective Date:** Unless the measure specifies otherwise, approved ballot measures take effect 30 days after the secretary of state has declared the official election results.

### **Mississippi Deadlines:**

Beginning with the day the sponsor receives the ballot title and summary, proponents have one year to circulate petitions *and* receive certification from the county circuit clerks. Petitions must be submitted to the secretary of state at least 90 days prior to the beginning of the regular session—which begins in the first week of January. Signature petition sheets must be submitted to and certified by county officials prior to submission



to the secretary of state. Petitioners are recommended to coordinate with county elections officials to determine when signatures must be submitted to county officials in order to meet the early October (of the preceding year) deadline for submission to the secretary of state.

*Article XV, Section 273, of the Mississippi Constitution addresses initiative, referendum, and recall. [Article XV, Mississippi Constitution](#).*

*Title 23, Chapter 17, of the Mississippi Code governs initiative, referendum, and recall. [Mississippi Code, Title 23, Chapter 17](#)*

## **Missouri**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Missouri](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Missouri)

**Constitution: 171,592 - Statute: 107,246 - Referendum: 107,246**

Citizens of [Missouri](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as either a [state statute](#) or a [constitutional amendment](#). In Missouri, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [Missouri General Assembly](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) or [legislatively referred state statutes](#) with a majority vote.

Missouri has a [single-subject rule](#) for all ballot measures. In addition, the rule limits the number of sections of the [constitution](#) an amendment may revise.

In Missouri, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to collecting signatures, proponents must file a draft of the petition form, including the text of the amendment or statute, with the [secretary of state](#). They must also designate one person to receive official notices regarding the measure. The secretary of state then forwards the petition to the [attorney general](#) for review and the [state auditor](#) for a fiscal analysis.

**Restrictions:** Each page of the petition sheet must contain the name of the county from which signatures were collected. Signatures from voters who reside in a different county than the one listed at the top of the page will be thrown out.

**Suspension of Law Targeted By Referendum:** If a referendum petition is certified as sufficient, the law targeted by the referendum petition is suspended until after the election on the law is held. [Article III, Section 52\(b\), of the Missouri Constitution](#) says the following: "Any measure referred to the people shall take effect when approved by a majority of the votes cast thereon, and not otherwise."

Missouri **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected.

Missouri **does not require** that petition circulators reside in the state.

**Supermajority:** Ballot measures **do not require** a supermajority for passage in Missouri.

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Missouri State Legislature](#) may repeal or amend any statute approved by voters. To repeal or alter an amendment, they must follow the ordinary [legislative referral process](#). In order to place an amendment on the ballot, lawmakers in each chamber must pass the resolution with a majority vote.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Missouri does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** Missouri's distribution requirement, unlike that found in most states, affects the total number of signatures required to qualify for the ballot. Petitioners in Missouri must collect the required signatures from at least two-thirds of the state's congressional districts. As there are eight congressional districts, sufficient signatures must be collected from six of them. Petitioners are free to select which congressional districts they will focus on for the purpose of collecting signatures.

\*Each page of the petition sheet must contain the name of the county from which signatures were collected. Signatures from **voters who reside in a different county than the one listed at the top of the page will be thrown out.**

**Effective Date:** Missouri initiatives take effect as soon as they are approved by voters.

### **Missouri Deadlines:**

In Missouri, petitioners may begin collecting signatures once the official ballot title has been certified. Initiatives can be filed with state officials to request an official ballot title immediately after a general election. Signatures must be filed with the secretary of state six months prior to the next biennial election, leaving a maximum of 18 months to circulate petitions.

*Article III, Sections 49-53 of the Missouri Constitution addresses initiative, referendum, and recall.* [Article III, Missouri Constitution](#)

*Title IX, Chapter 116 of the Missouri Code governs initiative, referendum, and recall.* [Missouri Revised Statutes, Title IX, Chapter 116](#)

### **Montana:**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Montana](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Montana)

## **Constitution: 60,359 - Statute: 30,179 - Referendum: 30,179**

Citizens of [Montana](#) may [initiate](#) a new law as either a [state statute](#) or a [constitutional amendment](#). In Montana, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#) and call a [constitutional convention](#) by initiative. The [Montana State Legislature](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) or [legislatively referred state statutes](#).

Constitutional amendments must meet a separate vote requirement. **Separate-vote requirements and single-subject rules are related** and have some overlapping intentions and effects. "If more than one amendment is submitted at the same election, each shall be so prepared and distinguished that it can be voted upon separately."

Petitioners in Montana **may not propose** legislation on certain subjects. Initiated laws may not make appropriations or create local or special laws.

**Competing Initiatives:** Montana law does not address competing ballot initiatives, except by requiring the [attorney general](#) to notify the [secretary of state](#) about conflicting proposals.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to collecting signatures, the initiative sponsor must file a draft of the amendment text with the [secretary of state](#). He or she must also file drafts of the statement of purpose and the statements explaining a "yes" or a "no" vote. . . After a proposal has been submitted, the secretary transfers the proposal to the Legislative Services Division. The division reviews the measure and accompanying statements for "clarity, consistency, and conformity with the most recent edition of the bill drafting manual." The division then recommends changes to the proponent. *After the attorney general's review, the relevant state legislative committee votes on whether to support or oppose the placement of the measure on the ballot. That vote does not have any procedural effect, but the results of the vote are included on petition sheets.*

Montana **prohibits** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. Montana **requires** that petition circulators reside in the state.

**Supermajority:** Montana ballot measures **do not require** a supermajority for passage.

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Montana State Legislature](#) may repeal or amend any statute approved by voters. To repeal or alter an amendment, they must follow the ordinary [legislative referral process](#). In order to place an amendment on the ballot, lawmakers must adopt the proposal by a [two-thirds \(66.67 percent\) supermajority vote](#) of all members.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Montana does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution requirements:** For a constitutional amendment, proponents must collect signatures equal to 10 percent of the qualified electors in each of two-fifths (40) of the state's 100 legislative districts. For an initiated statute or a veto referendum, signatures must be equal to 5 percent of the qualified electors in each of one-third (34) of the state's legislative districts. The number of qualified electors in any district, for the purpose of the distribution requirement, is equal to the number of votes cast for governor in that district in the last gubernatorial election.

If a petition is circulated after [redistricting](#) and before the next gubernatorial election, the number of qualified electors in each district is equal to the total number of votes cast for governor statewide divided by the total number of districts.

**Effective Date:** Unless the measure specifies otherwise, approved ballot measures take effect on the first day of October following the election.

### **Montana Deadlines:**

Once proponents have received the official petition proof copy, they have a maximum of one year to circulate petitions *and* receive certification from county election officials. The county officials must submit each verified petition to the secretary of state by the final filing deadline, which comes on the third Friday of the fourth month prior to the election. Proponents must submit their petitions to county officials no sooner than nine months and no later than four weeks prior to the final filing deadline. Proponents may begin collecting signatures no earlier than one year prior to the final filing deadline.

*Articles III, IV, XIV of the Montana Constitution address initiative, referendum, and recall. [Montana Constitution, Article III](#) ; [Article IV](#) ; [Article XIV](#)*

*Title 13, Chapter 27 of the Montana Code Annotated governs initiative, referendum, and recall. [Montana Code Annotated, Title 13, Chapter 27](#)*

### **Nebraska:**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Nebraska](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Nebraska)

**Constitution: 126,838 - Statute: 88,787 - Referendum: 63,419**

Citizens of [Nebraska](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as either a [state statute](#) or a [constitutional amendment](#). In Nebraska, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [Nebraska Unicameral Legislature](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) with a three-fifths majority vote.

In Nebraska, each proposed measure must address **only one subject**. Such laws are known as [single-subject rules](#).

In Nebraska, veto **referendums can** be used on emergency legislation.

**Subject Restriction:** Nebraska ballot measures may not enact any law which the legislature may not enact. In addition, ballot measures may not interfere with the legislature's constitutional right to raise necessary revenues via taxation.

**Competing Initiatives:** Nebraska law provides that in the event that two conflicting measures are approved, the measure with the most affirmative votes supersedes the other on all points of conflict. The other measure is not wholly superseded.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to collecting signatures, proponents must file a draft of the text of the measure and a statement of purpose, called an "**object clause**." Once this language is submitted to the [secretary of state](#), it is transmitted to the [revisor of statutes](#) for review. Proponents must also submit a sworn list of the petition's sponsors. The Revisor of Statutes reviews the proposed measure for "form and draftsmanship" and recommends changes. Sponsors are free to accept or reject any of these suggestions.

Nebraska **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. *In 2015, [Nebraska Legislative Bill 367](#) removed the state's ban on pay-per-signature practices. Prior to LB 367, the law was challenged in 2011 in [Bernbeck v. Gale](#), but the ban was not overturned.*

Nebraska **does not require** that petition circulators reside in the state. *It used to have such a ban on out-of-state petition signature collectors, but the rule was struck down in 2011 by a federal court in [Citizens in Charge v. Gale](#).*

**Supermajority:** In Nebraska, each ballot measure requires a **simple majority** of the votes cast for or against the measure. However, the number of affirmative votes cast for the measure must be **greater than 35 percent of the total votes cast** in the election. This also applies to [legislative referrals](#).

**Legislative Alterations:** The [Nebraska Legislature](#) may not "amend, repeal, modify, or impair" any initiative without a [two-thirds \(66.67 percent\) supermajority vote](#).

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** In Nebraska, ballot measures may not be reattempted more than once every three years.

**Distribution requirements:** Initiative proponents are required to collect signatures from 5 percent of the registered voters in each of two-fifths (38) of Nebraska's 93 counties. The same was true for veto referendums.

**Effective Date:** Ballot measures take effect upon the Governor of Nebraska's proclamation of the election results. The proclamation must be made within ten days of the completion of the election results canvass. The canvass is certified on the fourth Monday after the election.

## **Nebraska Deadlines:**

In Nebraska, petitioners may begin a petition drive at any time. However, according to state law, completed signature petitions are due at least four months prior to the next general election, and submitted signatures become invalid at the next general election occurring at least four months following the submission of the preliminary petition form. Therefore, for example, beginning a signature petition campaign seven months before a general election would give petitioners only three months to collect signatures, since they must submit final signatures four months before the election and, if they do not finish collecting signatures, all of the signatures collected from seven months before until four months before the most proximate general election would become invalid and could not be used to qualify the initiative for the following general election.

Since general elections are only held in even numbered years in Nebraska, this allows for a total possible period of just under two years to circulate petitions. For petitioners to maximize the time to collect signatures and give themselves the full two-year window, the [initiative petition application](#) should be submitted just under four months before a November general election, giving them until four months before the next November general election to collect signatures.

*Article III, Sections 2-3 of the Nebraska Constitution address initiatives. [Article III, Nebraska Constitution](#)*

*Chapter 32 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes governs initiatives. [Nebraska Revised Statutes, Chapter 32](#)*

## **New Mexico**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_referendum\\_process\\_in\\_New\\_Mexico](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_referendum_process_in_New_Mexico)

**Referendum: 71,475**

Citizens of [New Mexico](#) may repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). New Mexico does not feature the power of [initiative](#).

**Suspension of Law Targeted By Referendum:** Depending on the number of signatures submitted and when they are submitted, the law targeted by the referendum is either put on hold until the election or allowed to go into effect. Details about the requirements of each type of referendum are outlined below in each relevant section.

In New Mexico, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation.

**Subject Restrictions:** A veto referendum petition can be filed against any law except laws concerning the following issues: General appropriation laws / Laws providing for

the preservation of the public peace, health or safety / For the payment of the public debt or interest thereon, or the creation or funding of the same, except as in this constitution otherwise provided / For the maintenance of the public schools or state institutions, and local or special laws.

**Applying to Petition:** Before beginning to collect signatures for a referendum petition, the petitioners must submit to the [New Mexico secretary of state](#) a draft of the proposed petition form along with a proposed "popular name" for the targeted law. Within 10 days the secretary shall either approve the proposed petition form and "popular name" or reject it, providing suggested revisions. The secretary of state is responsible for affixing an issue number and the final "popular name" of the targeted law by which the question will be identified on the ballot.

**Supermajority:** For [both types of referendum](#), rejection of the targeted law requires a **simple majority of votes cast on the measure and a minimum of forty percent of the total votes** cast at the election.

**Legislative Alteration:** A law repealed through the referendum process is repealed as if the legislature had voted to repeal it. Therefore, the legislature can propose or re-approve similar legislation according to the normal procedures.

**Distribution Requirements:** Signatures equal to a minimum of 10 percent of the votes cast at the last general election in each county must be collected from registered voters in each of three-fourths of the state's 33 counties, amounting to a 25-county distribution requirement. This distribution requirement applies to both referendum petitions that suspend the targeted law and those that do not.

**Effective Date:** If voters choose to reject a law targeted by a referendum petition that did not have sufficient signatures to suspend the law, the law is repealed upon the certification of election results. If they choose not to reject the targeted law, no change is made and the law continues to be effective.

If voters choose not to reject a law targeted by a referendum petition that has met the requirements to suspend the law, the law goes into effect upon the certification of the election results at the election on which the question is presented to voters. If they choose to reject the law, the law continues to be ineffective and void.

### **New Mexico Deadlines:**

Signatures for referendum petitions must be turned in at least **four months prior** to the state's general election immediately following the legislative session in which the targeted law was approved.



In order to suspend the targeted law, the higher threshold of signatures needs to be turned in no more than **90 days after** the adjournment of the legislative session at which the targeted law was approved.

[New Mexico Constitution, Article IV, Section 1](#)

**See law:** [2021 New Mexico Statutes Chapter 1 - Elections](#)

## **Nevada**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Nevada](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Nevada)

**Constitution: 102,362 - Statute (Indirect): 135,561 - Referendum: 102,362**

Citizens of [Nevada](#) may [initiate](#) statutes through the process of indirect initiative and constitutional amendments through the process of [direct initiative](#). Once sufficient signatures have been collected, statutory initiatives are first presented to the [Nevada State Legislature](#). If approved by the legislature and signed by the [Governor](#), the proposed statute becomes law. If not, the law is submitted to voters at the next general election. However, upon the Governor's recommendation (and approval), the legislature may propose an alternative statute to voters. Proposed amendments proceed directly to a vote of the people, but must be approved at two consecutive elections.

In Nevada, citizens also have the power to refer laws to a vote of the people. If the law is [rejected](#), then it is repealed. If it is [affirmed](#), then the law remains in effect and cannot be repealed without a popular vote. The [Nevada State Legislature](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) by a majority vote in two consecutive regular sessions--these only require approval in one election.

In Nevada, each proposed measure must address **only one subject**. Such laws are also known as [single-subject rules](#).

**Subject Restrictions:** In Nevada, an initiated measure may not make appropriations or require expenditures unless it also establishes a tax sufficient to cover the expense.

In Nevada, veto **referendums can** be used on emergency legislation. Signatures are due 120 days before the next general election.

**Competing Initiatives:** Nevada law provides that in the event that two conflicting measures are approved, the measure with the most affirmative votes takes effect. The other measure does take effect. If two measures tie, neither measure takes effect.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to collecting signatures, proponents must file a draft of the petition with the [secretary of state](#), including the text of the measure and a brief



summary of the effect of the measure. The Legislative Counsel reviews the petition and suggests technical changes.

Nevada **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. Nevada **does not require** that petition circulators reside in the state.

**Supermajority:** In Nevada, each ballot measure requires a **simple majority** of the votes cast for or against the measure. However, [initiated constitutional amendments](#) must be approved at **two consecutive elections**. This does not apply to [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#), which must be **approved twice by the legislature** (with a majority vote) but only once by the state's voters.

**Legislative Alteration:** For three years after an initiated statute is approved, it may not be "amended, annulled, repealed, set aside or suspended" by the [Nevada State Legislature](#). Changes to initiated amendments must follow the ordinary legislative process, which consists of majority votes in two consecutive regular legislative sessions and majority approval at a statewide election. [Statutes affirmed](#) according to a [veto referendum process and election](#) may not be repealed or amended without a vote of the people.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Nevada does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** Under Nevada's distribution requirement, proponents must collect signatures equal to 10 percent of the total votes cast in the last general election, distributed evenly throughout all of the state's congressional districts. To determine the signature requirements in each congressional district, the Nevada secretary of state calculates the number of voters that cast a vote in the state's last general election. He/she then divides that number by the number of congressional districts. The resulting figure, rounded up to the nearest whole number, is the number of signatures that must be collected in each of the state's four congressional districts.

**Effective Date:** Ballot measures take effect when the Nevada Supreme Court completes its canvass of the votes. The Court meets to canvass the vote on the fourth Tuesday in November.

### **Nevada Deadlines:**

In Nevada, [initiated statutes](#), [initiated amendments](#), and [referendums/affirmations](#) each have different deadlines and circulation periods. Although the state constitution provides dates for filing the completed petition with the secretary of state, the relevant date for proponents is the date that petitions are due with county election officials. County officials forward the certified petitions to the secretary.

### **Statutes:**

- The initial filing cannot be made before January 1 of the year preceding the next regular legislative session.
- The petition must be filed with county officials by the second Tuesday in November of an even-numbered year.
- The final filing must be made at least 30 days prior to the next regular session of the Legislature.

### **Amendments:**

- The initial filing cannot be made before September 1 of the year preceding the election year.
- The petition must be filed with county officials by the third Tuesday in June of an even-numbered year.
- The final filing must be made at least 90 days before the next regular general election.

### **Referendums/Affirmations:**

- The initial filing cannot be made before August 1 of the year preceding the election year.
- The petition must be filed with county officials by the third Tuesday in June of an even-numbered year.
- The final filing must be made at least 120 days before the next general election.

*Article 19 of the Nevada Constitution addresses initiatives. [Article 19, Nevada Constitution](#)*

*Chapter 295 of the Nevada Revised Statutes governs initiatives. [Nevada Revised Statutes, Chapter 295](#)*

### **North Dakota:**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_North\\_Dakota](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_North_Dakota)

**Constitution: 31,164 - Statute: 15,582 - Referendum: 15,582**

Citizens of [North Dakota](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as either a [state statute](#) or a [constitutional amendment](#). In North Dakota, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [North Dakota Legislative Assembly](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) with a majority vote.

North Dakota **does not** employ a [single-subject rule](#).

**Subject Restrictions:** [A prohibition against the circulation of a petition](#) to initiate a constitutional amendment that would directly appropriate public funds or require lawmakers to directly appropriate funds for a specific purpose was approved by the North Dakota legislature in 2013.

**Competing Initiatives:** North Dakota law provides that in the event that two conflicting measures are approved, the measure with the most affirmative votes supersedes the other.

**Applying to Petition:** North Dakota is one of several states that require a certain number of signatures to accompany petition applications. The signatures of at least 25 qualified voters who will serve as sponsors of the ballot measure are required. A chairperson for the sponsors must be also designated. In addition, sponsors must file a copy of the petition complete with the text of the measure. The [North Dakota secretary of state](#) reviews the petition to ensure that it is in "proper form and contains the names and addresses of the sponsors and the full text of the measure."

North Dakota **prohibits** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. North Dakota **requires** signature gatherers to be eligible to vote in the state.

**Supermajority:** In North Dakota, each ballot measure requires only a **simple majority** of the votes cast for or against it for approval. This also applies to [legislative referrals](#).

**Legislative Alteration:** The [North Dakota Legislative Assembly](#) may not repeal or amend an initiative for seven years without a 2/3 majority vote.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** In North Dakota, there is effectively no limit on how often ballot measures may be reattempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** None

**Effective Date:** Approved North Dakota ballot measures take effect 30 days after the election.

### **North Dakota Deadlines:**

In North Dakota, petitioners may only circulate a petition for one year following the secretary of state's initial approval. The completed petition must be submitted at least 120 days prior to the election per [Measure 1](#), approved on [June 10, 2014](#).

*Article III of the North Dakota Constitution addresses initiatives. [Article III, North Dakota Constitution](#)*

*Chapter 1 of Title 16.1 of the North Dakota Century Code governs initiatives. [North Dakota Century Code, Chapter 1](#)*

## **Ohio:**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Ohio](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Ohio)

**Constitution: 413,488 - Statute (Indirect): 124,046 - Referendum: 248,093**

Citizens of Ohio may **initiate** statutes through the process of **indirect initiative** and constitutional amendments through the process of **direct initiative**. Once sufficient signatures have been collected, statutory initiatives are first presented to the **Ohio General Assembly**. If approved by the legislature unamended, the proposed statute becomes law. If not, petitioners must collect an additional round of signatures within ninety days in order to place the statute on the ballot. Proposed amendments proceed directly to a vote of the people. The General Assembly may also propose amendments to the people as **legislatively referred constitutional amendments**.

In Ohio, each proposed measure must address **only one subject**. Such laws are also known as **single-subject rules**.

**Subject Restrictions:** In Ohio, an initiated measure may not authorize "any classification of property for the purpose of levying different rates of taxation" or "any single tax on land or land values or land sites at a higher rate or by a different rule than is or may be applied to improvements thereon or to personal property."

**Monopolies:** [Section 1e of Article II of the Ohio Constitution](#) also gives a restriction on initiatives that institute monopolies or special privileges. The Ohio Ballot Board is required to investigate any proposed initiative and determine if it would create an economic monopoly or special privilege for any nonpublic entity, including individuals, corporations and organizations.

In Ohio, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation.

**Applying to Petition:** Ohio is one of several states that require a certain number of signatures to accompany the initial petition filing. The signatures of at least **1,000 qualified electors** are required. Along with signatures, proponents must file a copy of the proposed measure and a summary of that measure with the Ohio Attorney General. They must also designate a committee of three to five people to represent the petitioners.

The proposed measure and summary are first reviewed by the Attorney General. If the Attorney General finds that the summary is fair and accurate, then he or she forwards the measure to the **Ohio Ballot Board**. The board reviews the measure to ensure that it conforms to Ohio's single-subject rule.

Ohio **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. *Ohio used to have a ban, but the law was struck down on March 5, 2008, in Citizens for Tax Reform v. Deters.*

Ohio law contains provisions requiring that petition circulators for every type of petition except a presidential nomination petition reside in the state. *With regard to a presidential nomination, however, the courts ruled on October 29, 2008, that the residential requirement for at least presidential nominations was unconstitutional in Nader v. Blackwell. The court also noted that the ruling could be used as a precedent by any other plaintiff. Ohio legislators then passed a law, Senate Bill 47 (2013), that removed the residency requirement as applied to presidential nomination petitions.*

**Supermajority:** In Ohio, each ballot measure requires approval from a **simple majority** of the votes cast for and against it.

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Ohio General Assembly](#) may repeal or amend an initiated statute by a simple majority vote. Changes to initiated amendments must follow the ordinary legislative process, which requires a three-fifths vote in both chambers of the state legislature and majority approval at a statewide election.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Ohio does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** For all measures, signatures must be gathered from at least 44 of Ohio's 88 counties. Petitioners must gather signatures equal to a minimum of half the total required percentage of the gubernatorial vote in each of the 44 counties: 5 percent for amendments, 1.5 percent for statutes, and 3 percent for referendums.

This requirement also applies to the second round of signatures needed to place a statute on the ballot once it has been rejected by the General Assembly.

*A person who signs a petition must live in the precinct in which the candidacy or ballot issue will appear in an election*

**Effective Date:** Ballot measures take effect 30 days after the election at which they are approved.

### **Ohio Deadlines:**

Ohio law does not limit how long a petition may be circulated. Signatures for an initiated statute must be filed at least 10 days prior to the legislative session. If the number of valid signatures submitted is found to be insufficient, sponsors may collect additional signatures and file them within one week of being notified of the insufficiency. If the state legislature does not enact the law, supplemental signatures must be filed within 90 days of the [General Assembly's](#) rejection of the measure. Sufficient signatures for

constitutional amendments trigger a ballot measure at the next general election at least 125 days after the signatures are submitted. Thus, if signatures are submitted less than 125 days prior to a general election, and the signature petition is found to be sufficient, the [initiated constitutional amendment](#) would go on the following general election ballot.

*Article XVI of the Ohio Constitution addresses initiatives.* [Article XVI, Ohio Constitution](#)

*Chapter 3519 of Title XXXV of the Ohio Revised Code governs initiatives.* [Ohio Revised Code, Title XXXV, Chapter 3519](#)

## **Oklahoma**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Oklahoma](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Oklahoma)

**Constitution: 172,993 - Statute: 92,263 - Referendum: 57,664**

Citizens of [Oklahoma](#) may [initiate](#) statewide legislation via ballot measures in the form of either [initiated state statutes](#) or [initiated constitutional amendments](#). In Oklahoma, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#).

On the local level, all Oklahoma municipalities have a mandated initiative and referendum process for local ballot measures. See also: [Laws governing local ballot measures in Oklahoma](#).

Oklahoma has a [single-subject rule](#) for both initiated statutes and initiated amendments.

In Oklahoma, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation.

**Competing Initiatives:** Oklahoma law provides that in the event that two conflicting measures are approved, the measure with the most affirmative votes supersedes the other on all points of conflict. The other measure is not wholly superseded.

Oklahoma law is **unique in providing a second chance when two conflicting measures** are both defeated. In Oklahoma, if two conflicting measures are both defeated, then the one with the most affirmative votes, provided it received approval from at least one-third of the total voters for or against both measures, is resubmitted to voters at the next election.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to collecting signatures, proponents of a ballot measure must file a copy of their petition with the [Oklahoma secretary of state](#). In addition, they must file separate copies of the measure's text with the secretary of state and the [Oklahoma attorney general](#). The text of the measure must also appear on the petitions. Proponents should also file a ballot title of 200 words or less with the secretary, explaining the measure. This ballot title is not included on the petition. The secretary of

state reviews the petition form and transmits the ballot title to the attorney general for review.

Oklahoma **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. Oklahoma **does not require** signature gatherers to be state residents. *It used to limit signature gathering to "qualified electors" and, thus, residents, but this statute was overturned in [Yes on Term Limits v. Savage](#).*

**Supermajority:** In Oklahoma, each ballot measure requires only a **simple majority** of the votes cast for it and against it.

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Oklahoma State Legislature](#) may repeal an initiated statute with a simple majority vote. In order to change or repeal a constitutional amendment, lawmakers must place an amendment on the ballot via the ordinary referral process, which consists of a simple majority vote of each chamber.

In Oklahoma, no measure rejected by voters may be initiated again within three years unless proponents can gather signatures equal to 25 percent of the total vote cast for governor in the last gubernatorial election. Initiated amendments and statutes ordinarily require 15 percent and 8 percent respectively.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** In Oklahoma, no measure rejected by voters may be initiated again within three years unless proponents can gather signatures equal to 25 percent of the total vote cast for governor in the last gubernatorial election. Initiated amendments and statutes ordinarily require 15 percent and 8 percent respectively.

**Distribution Requirements:** None

**Effective Date:** Oklahoma ballot measures take effect upon approval by voters.

### **Oklahoma Deadlines:**

In Oklahoma, proponents may circulate a petition for a period of 90 days. For initiatives, the 90-day period for circulation begins on a day set by the [secretary of state](#) between 15 and 30 days after all challenges to the initiative petition are finalized. For [referendums](#), signatures are due 90 days after the adjournment of the legislative session in which the targeted law was passed. Measures are generally placed on the next general election ballot, but the governor may call a special election or place the measure on the primary ballot.

*(State elections officials in Oklahoma recommend filing a proposed initiative during the first months of the year preceding the targeted election year due to the two periods during which challenges may be filed against an initiative. For example, to qualify an initiative for the November 2020 ballot, Oklahoma elections officials recommend filing the initiative proposal in the early months of 2019.)*



Articles V and XXIV of the Oklahoma Constitution address initiatives. [Article V, Oklahoma Constitution](#); [Article XXIV, Oklahoma Constitution](#)

*Title 34 of the Oklahoma Statutes governs initiatives.* [Oklahoma Statutes, Title 34](#)

## **Oregon:**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Oregon](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Oregon)

**Constitution: 156,231 - Statute: 117,173 - Referendum: 78,115**

Citizens of [Oregon](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as either a [state statute](#) or a [constitutional amendment](#). In Oregon, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [Oregon State Legislature](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) or [legislatively referred state statutes](#) with a majority vote of each chamber.

In Oregon, each proposed measure must address **only one subject**. Such laws are known as [single-subject rules](#).

In Oregon, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation.

**Applying to Petition:** Oregon is one of several states that require a certain number of signatures to accompany the prospective petition filing. The signatures of at least **1,000 electors** are required. Prior to gathering these signatures, petitioners must submit the text of the measure, a form disclosing their planned use of paid circulators, and a form designating up to three chief petitioners. After these items have been submitted, the Elections Division provides petitioners with cover and signature sheet templates for gathering preliminary signatures. . . If the signatures are sufficient, the secretary forwards the petition to the attorney general to receive a ballot title. At this time, the secretary also sends the petition and a notice of the successful verification to the chief petitioners, the legislative assembly, and any person subscribing to the "interested party" service. This distribution begins a period of public comment on the constitutionality of the prospective petition. After the public comments have been received, the secretary, consulting with the attorney general, issues a statement declaring that the measure either complies or does not comply with the state constitution . . . Once the ballot title is finalized, the elections division provides the chief petitioners with official cover and signature sheet templates. Petitioners then complete these templates and submit them for final approval by the elections division.

Oregon **prohibits** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. *The ban was challenged but upheld in [Prete v. Bradbury](#) in 2006.* Oregon **does not require** petition circulators to reside in the state.



**Supermajority:** Only ballot measures that propose changing vote requirements require a supermajority.

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Oregon State Legislature](#) may repeal or amend an initiated statute by a simple majority vote. Changes to initiated amendments must follow the ordinary legislative process, which consists of a majority vote in both chambers.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Oregon does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution requirements:** None

**Effective Date:** Ballot measures take effect 30 days after the election at which they are approved.

### **Oregon Deadlines:**

Signatures for Oregon initiatives must be submitted four months prior to the next regular general election. Since these elections are scheduled biennially, petitioners have approximately two years to circulate petitions. To maximize the circulation period, petitioners should make their initial filing shortly after the final filing deadline for the election prior to the election at which the measure will be considered. If signatures are submitted at least 165 days before an election and the petition is found insufficient, additional signatures can be submitted prior to the final deadline.

In addition to the final deadline, Oregon imposes special deadlines for submitting signatures gathered by paid circulators. Paid gatherers must submit their signatures after every month. Signatures that were collected more than a month before any given monthly submission will not be counted. The exact day of the month for submitting these signatures is set by the secretary of state.

*Article IV of the Oregon Constitution addresses initiatives. [Article IV, Oregon Constitution](#)*

*Chapter 250 of the Oregon Revised Statutes governs initiatives. [Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 250](#)*

### **South Dakota:**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_South\\_Dakota](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_South_Dakota)

**Constitution: 35,017 - Statute: 17,509 - Referendum: 17,509**

Citizens of [South Dakota](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as either a [state statute](#) or a [constitutional amendment](#). In South Dakota, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). The [South Dakota State Legislature](#) may also place measures on the ballot as [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) or [legislatively referred state statutes](#) with a majority vote of each chamber.

In South Dakota, all citizen initiatives—both [initiated constitutional amendments](#) and [initiated state statutes](#)—must concern **only one subject**.

In South Dakota, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation.

**Competing Initiatives:** State law provides that if two initiatives with conflicting provisions or contrary intent are approved, the one that receives more "yes" vote supersedes in all areas of conflict.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to collecting signatures, sponsors must file a copy of the proposed statute or amendment with the South Dakota Legislative Research Council for review. Once the review has been completed and the ballot language drafted by the [South Dakota attorney general](#), a complete copy of the petition, including the full text of the proposed statute or amendment, the attorney general's summary, a notarized list of the names and addresses of the petition sponsors and a statement of organization, must be submitted to the [secretary of state](#). (An example of a completed initial filing can be found [here](#).) For referendum petitions, a draft of the petition form must be filed with the secretary of state before circulation.

Once the measure is submitted to the Legislative Research Council, the council reviews the measure for clarity, coherence and style. The council then provides comments to the sponsors as well as the secretary of state and attorney general. All suggestions made in the comments are optional.

South Dakota **prohibits** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. However, state law permits employers to set minimum gathering requirements and pay discretionary bonuses based on productivity. South Dakota **does not require** signature gatherers to be residents of the state. South Dakota had a requirement, but a federal court struck down the law as unconstitutional in January 2023.<sup>[9]</sup> (South Dakota forbids registered sex offenders from circulating petitions in the state.)

**Supermajority:** In South Dakota, each ballot measure requires only a **simple majority** of the votes cast for or against it.

**Legislative Alteration:** The [South Dakota State Legislature](#) may repeal an initiated statute with a simple majority vote. In order to change or repeal a constitutional

amendment, lawmakers must place an amendment on the ballot via the ordinary referral process, which consists of a simple majority vote in each chamber.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** South Dakota does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted.

**Distribution Requirements:** None

**Effective Date:** South Dakota ballot measures take effect on July 1 following completion of the official canvass by the State Canvassing Board.

### **South Dakota Deadlines:**

Initiated constitutional amendment: In South Dakota, proponents may circulate initiated constitutional amendment petitions for up to one year. Signatures must also be filed at least one year prior to the election, meaning that in order for proponents to use the full year of signature collection time, the initiative must be filed two years prior to the election.

Initiated state statute: Prior to a 2021 court order, initiative sponsors could collect signatures for a period of one year *and* signatures needed to be submitted at least one year before the targeted election. On August 30, 2021, the United States District Court for the District of South Dakota Northern Division ruled that the requirement that petitions be submitted one year before the election date violated the [First Amendment of the United States Constitution](#) and ordered that, for measures amending or adding a state law, the signature deadline shall be the first Tuesday in May of an election year (six months before the election date), which is May 8, 2022, for 2022 ballot measures.<sup>[11]</sup>

Veto referendum: For referendum petitions, the completed signature petitions must be submitted within 90 days after the legislative session in which the targeted law was approved adjourns.

**Articles III and XXIII of the South Dakota Constitution address initiatives.**

- [Article III, South Dakota Constitution](#)
- [Article XXIII, South Dakota Constitution](#)

**Titles 2 and 12 of the South Dakota Codified Laws govern initiatives.**

- [South Dakota Codified Laws, Title 2, Chapter 1](#)
- [South Dakota Codified Laws, Title 12, Chapter 13](#)
- [South Dakota Administrative Rules, Chapter 5:02:08](#)

## Utah:

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Utah](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Utah)

**Statute (Indirect and Direct): 132,721 - Referendum: 132,721**

Citizens of Utah may initiate legislation as either a direct or indirect state statute. In Utah, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via veto referendum. Citizens may not initiate constitutional amendments. The Utah State Legislature, however, may place legislatively referred constitutional amendments on the ballot with a two-thirds majority vote of each chamber.

In Utah, each proposed measure must address **only one subject** clearly expressed in its title.

**Subject Restrictions:** Any initiated measure that would "allow, limit, or prohibit the taking of wildlife or the season for or method of taking wildlife" requires a two-thirds supermajority in Utah.

**Competing Initiatives:** Utah law provides that in the event that two conflicting measures are approved, the measure with the most affirmative votes supersedes the other. The governor of Utah is responsible for determining whether two measures conflict; the decision can be appealed to the courts.

**Applying to Petition:** At least five sponsors (each a Utah resident who has voted in the past three years) must apply in order to start a statewide petition. Along with a form identifying the sponsors, proponents must submit the full text of the measure, a descriptive title, and a statement regarding their planned use of paid petition circulators. Applications should be submitted to the Utah lieutenant governor. . . At this time, the measure is also submitted to the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst for a fiscal analysis. Although other states require public hearings on proposed measures, Utah is the only state where that process is part of the review/revision process. After the fiscal review has been complete and prior to collecting signatures, sponsors must host seven meetings around the state to gather feedback

Utah **prohibits** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. *The state's pay-per-signature ban was passed in 2021 through House Bill 136.* Utah **requires** petition circulators to be residents of the state.

Any measure that would "allow, limit, or prohibit the taking of wildlife or the season for or method of taking wildlife" requires a two-thirds **supermajority** in Utah. **All others require only a simple majority.**

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Utah State Legislature](#) may amend any initiated statute by a simple majority vote. When presented with an indirect initiative, the Legislature may make technical corrections to the proposed law.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Once signatures have been filed, no "identical or substantially similar" measure may be submitted for circulation (initial filing/application) for two years.

**Distribution Requirements:** For directly [initiated state statutes](#), signatures must be collected from each of at least 26 of the 29 [Utah State Senate](#) districts equal to 8 percent of active voters in the state as of January 1 of the year following the last regular general election.

For [indirect initiatives](#), signatures must be collected from each of at least 26 of the 29 Utah State Senate districts equal to 4 percent of the active voter count. If a second round of signatures is collected, the signatures as a whole, equaling 8 percent of active voters, are subject to the requirement for direct initiatives.

For [referendum petitions](#), signatures must be collected from each of at least 15 of the 29 counties in Utah equal to 8 percent of active voters.

**Effective Date:** If an indirect initiative is adopted by the legislature, it takes effect 60 days after the last day of the legislative session in which it is passed unless a later date is specified by the initiative or an earlier date is specified and the legislature approves the initiative by a [two-thirds \(66.67 percent\) supermajority vote](#).

Unless a later date is otherwise specified in the measure, direct initiatives take effect according to the following rules:

- 60 days after the last day of the general legislative session immediately following the election if the measure doesn't concern taxes;
- January 1 of the year after the general legislative session immediately after the election for any change related to property taxes and privilege tax;
- April 1 following the election for tax decreases **not** related to mineral production tax, corporate franchise and income tax, gross receipts tax, and individual income tax;
- January 1 of the year after the general legislative session immediately after the election for tax increases **not** related to mineral production tax, corporate franchise and income tax, gross receipts tax, and individual income tax; and
- the beginning of the tax year after the January 1 immediately following the election for any of the taxes listed above.

## **Utah Deadlines:**

All signatures for direct Utah initiatives (and for the second round of signatures for indirect initiatives) must be submitted within 316 days of the initial filing or by February 15 of the general election year--whichever is sooner. The first round of signatures for indirect initiatives are due on the 15th day of November prior to the general session where the petition will be considered. Signature sheets must be submitted to the county clerk in the county where the sheets were circulated. Moreover, signature petition sheet packets for direct initiatives must be submitted to county clerks on a rolling basis no more than 30 days after the first signature is added to the packet.

Signatures for veto referendums must be submitted on a 14-day rolling basis and must all be submitted within 40 days of the adjournment of the legislative session at which the targeted bill was passed

*Article VI of the Utah Constitution addresses initiatives. [Article VI, Utah Constitution Title 20A, Chapter 7 of the Utah Code governs initiatives. Utah Code, Title 20A, Chapter 7](#)*

## **Washington:**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Washington](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Washington)

**Statute (Indirect and Direct): 324,516 - Referendum: 162,258**

Citizens of [Washington](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as either a [direct](#) or [indirect state statute](#). In Washington, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). Citizens may not [initiate constitutional amendments](#). The [Washington State Legislature](#), however, may place [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) on the ballot with a two-thirds majority vote of each chamber.

Washington has a **single-subject rule** for ballot measures. The relevant law restricts bills in the legislature. However, this restriction has been found to apply to initiatives as well.

**Subject Restrictions:** Any initiated measure that would authorize gambling or a lottery requires a 60 percent supermajority in Washington.

**Competing Initiatives:** In Washington, competing measures are arranged on the ballot so voters can express two separate preferences. First, voters choose between either measure or neither measure. Second, voters choose between one measure and the other. If a majority prefer neither, both measures fail. If a majority prefer either, then the second vote determines which measure will be approved.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to collecting signatures, one sponsor (acting individually or for a group) must file a copy of the proposed statute with the [Washington secretary of](#)

[state](#). The sponsor must also file an affidavit certifying that he or she is a legal Washington voter. There is a nominal fee for this filing. Once the measure is submitted, the secretary sends a copy to the Office of the Code Reviser. . . . Once the review is complete, the office issues the sponsor a certificate of review. The sponsor must then refile the measure and certificate with the secretary of state who then assigns the petition a number.

Washington **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected. *Washington had a ban but the law was struck down in LIMIT v. Maleng in 1994.* Washington **does not require** signature gatherers to be residents of the state.

In Washington, any initiated measure that would authorize **gambling or a lottery requires** a 60 percent **supermajority** vote. **Other measures require only a simple majority vote.** Regardless, for any ballot measure to be approved, **at least one third of the voters** voting in the election **must cast a vote on the measure.**

**Legislative Alteration:** In Washington, no initiated statute may be amended or repealed for two years without a [two-thirds \(66.67 percent\) supermajority vote](#) in both chambers. Any initiated law, so amended, is not subject to veto referendum. After two years, the law may be repealed or amended by a simple majority vote of the legislature.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Washington does not limit how soon an initiative can be re-attempted. For example, after the defeat of [Initiative 1100](#) in 2010, the measure was revised and reintroduced as [Initiative 1183](#) in 2011, and it was approved.

**Distribution Requirements:** None

**Effective Date:** Washington ballot measures generally take effect 30 days after the election. The official canvass of the vote must also be certified to the governor by this date. Initiated measures may specify an alternative effective date.

### **Washington Deadlines:**

In Washington, initial filings for direct initiatives cannot be made more than 10 months before the general election at which their proposal would be presented to voters. Initial filings for indirect initiatives cannot be made more than 10 months before the regular session at which their proposal would be presented to lawmakers.

Signatures for direct initiatives are due at least four months prior to the general election. Signatures for indirect initiatives are due at least 10 days prior to the beginning of the legislative session in the year of the targeted election.

Signatures for veto referendums must be submitted 90 days following the adjournment of the legislative session at which the targeted bill was passed.



*Article II of the Washington Constitution addresses initiatives. [Article II, Washington State Constitution](#)*

*Chapter 72, Title 29A of the Washington Codified Laws govern initiatives. [Revised Code of Washington, Title 29A, Chapter 72](#)*

### **Wyoming:**

[https://ballotpedia.org/Laws\\_governing\\_the\\_initiative\\_process\\_in\\_Wyoming](https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Wyoming)

**Statute (Indirect): 29,730 - Referendum: 29,370**

Citizens of [Wyoming](#) may [initiate](#) legislation as a [state statute](#). Although the state does not provide for [indirect initiatives](#), legislators may avert a ballot measure vote by passing substantially similar legislation. In Wyoming, citizens also have the power to repeal legislation via [veto referendum](#). Citizens may not [initiate constitutional amendments](#). The [Wyoming State Legislature](#), however, may place [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#) on the ballot with a two-thirds majority vote of each chamber.

In Wyoming, each proposed measure must address **only one subject** expressed in its title.

In Wyoming, veto **referendums cannot** be used on emergency legislation. They may also not be used on legislation that dedicates revenue, makes appropriations, or to local or special legislation.

**Subject Restrictions:** In Wyoming, an initiated measure may not, "dedicate revenues, make or repeal appropriations, create courts, define the jurisdiction of courts or prescribe their rules, enact local or special legislation, enact anything prohibited by the constitution for enactment by the legislature, or enact anything that is substantially the same as that defeated by an initiative election within five (5) years preceding the time of filing of the petition."

**Competing Initiatives:** Wyoming law does not address conflicting ballot measures. The law does, however, prevent the initiative power to be used to enact anything that was defeated at an initiative election within the last 5 years.

**Applying to Petition:** Prior to circulation, proponents must submit the text of the measure and designate three registered Wyoming voters to represent the initiative campaign as sponsors. These three form the committee of applicants and represent initiative petitioners and sponsors. There is a \$500 filing fee, which also applies for referendum petitions. . . Along with the application, sponsors must submit a copy of the proposed law to the [secretary of state](#) for review. The initiative must be in the form required of bills introduced in the legislature and prescribed by [W.S. 8-1-105](#). . . Sponsors must submit a final version to the secretary of state along with the secretary's



comments and the signatures of 100 additional registered voters within 30 days after submitting a proposed bill. After the conference, sponsors have 5 days to decide whether to amend their proposal.

Wyoming **allows** paying signature gatherers based on the number of signatures collected for initiatives but **prohibits** paying signature gatherers on a per-signature basis for veto referendums. Wyoming **does not require** circulators to be a resident of Wyoming. Circulators must, however, be U.S. Citizens.

All Wyoming measures require **affirmative votes from a majority of those casting a ballot in the general election--not just of those casting a vote on the measure.** This also applies to [legislatively referred constitutional amendments](#).

**Legislative Alteration:** The [Wyoming State Legislature](#) may not repeal an approved measure for two years after it takes effect. It may be amended at any time by a simple majority vote.

**Re-attempting An Initiative:** Once a measure has been defeated at the ballot box, no measure "substantially the same" as the one defeated may be filed for verification within five years.

**Distribution Requirements:** In Wyoming, signatures equal to 15 percent of the total number of voters in the preceding general election must be collected in each of 2/3 of the state's 23 counties.

**Effective Date:** In Wyoming, approved measures take effect 90 days after the official certification of results by the secretary of state.

### **Wyoming Deadlines:**

#### **Citizen initiatives:**

As soon as petition sponsors have received the petition form from the state, they have 18 months to collect signatures and file their petitions. If sufficient signatures have been gathered, the measure is presented to voters at the next general election after a legislative session has convened and adjourned.

#### **Veto referendum:**

Sponsors of veto referendums have 90 days after the adjournment of the legislative session in which the targeted law was passed to circulate petitions.

*Article 3 of the Wyoming Constitution addresses initiatives. [Article 3, Wyoming Constitution](#)*

***Title 22, Chapter 24 of the Wyoming Statutes governs initiatives. [Wyoming Statutes, Title 22, Chapter 24](#)***

## **Washington D.C.**

<https://www.dcboe.org/Ballot-Measures/Initiative-Measures>

### **Initiative or Referendum: 5 Percent of City population**

#### **Supporters File the Measure with the Board of Elections**

The process begins when a registered District of Columbia voter (the proposer) files the proposed Measure with the Voter Services division of the District of Columbia Board of Elections (DCBOE). The filing must include:

#### **The Board of Elections Considers the Subject Matter**

Once a Measure is properly filed, DCBOE publishes it in the DC Register and provides notice of a public meeting to consider whether the subject matter meets the requirements set forth in the law. Members of the public are invited to submit written testimony on the subject matter and to testify before the Board at the public meeting.

#### **The Board Approves a Short Title and Summary Statement**

Within 20 days after it accepts a Measure, the Board must prepare its official short title and summary statement and place the Measure in the proper legislative format.

#### **10-Day Challenge Period Begins**

Once approved, the Board's formulations are published in the DC Register, in a newspaper of general circulation, and on the DCBOE website. . . . At the end of the challenge period (or once any court challenges are successfully resolved), DCBOE prepares an original petition form for the Measure's proposer to adopt at a public meeting. **The Petition Form is Approved**

**Distribution Requirements:** an Initiative or Referendum must collect the signatures of at least five percent of the voters registered citywide. These signatures must be distributed to reflect at least five percent of the registered voters in at least five of the eight wards.

**Washington DC Deadlines:** For an Initiative Measure, the proposer has **180 days beginning the day after the petition is adopted** to gather signatures using the petition form provided. For a Referendum Measure, the proposer has **until the end of the congressional review period for the Council act at issue** to gather signatures using the petition form provided.

## **The Measure is Certified for the Ballot**

At the end of the signature verification phase, the Board calls a public meeting to announce whether the petition meets the citywide and ward-level requirements . . . For an Initiative Measure, DCBOE holds an election during the **next citywide election held at least 90 days after the certification**. For a Referendum Measure, DCBOE holds an election **within 114 days of the certification** (but if another citywide election is already scheduled to occur within 54 to 114 days of the certification, DCBOE may present the Referendum at that election).