



CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE

STATEWIDE INITIATIVE GUIDE

Statewide Initiative Guide

Preface

The Secretary of State has prepared this Statewide Initiative Guide, as required by Elections Code section 9018, to provide an understanding of the procedures and requirements for preparing and circulating initiatives and for filing sections of the petition as well as to describe the procedure of verifying signatures on the petition. This Guide is for general information only and does not have the force and effect of law, regulation, or rule. In case of conflict, the law, regulation, or rule will apply. Interested persons should obtain the most up-to-date information available because of possible changes in law or procedure since the publication of this Guide.

Background and History of the Initiative Process

In a special election held on October 10, 1911, California became the 10th state to adopt the initiative process. That year, Governor Hiram Johnson began his term by promising to give citizens a tool they could use to adopt laws and constitutional amendments without the support of the Governor or the Legislature. The new Legislature put a package of constitutional amendments on the ballot that placed more control of California politics directly into the hands of the people. This package included the ability to recall elected officials, the right to repeal laws by referendum, and the ability to enact state laws by initiative.

The initiative is the power of the people of California to propose statutes and to propose amendments to the California Constitution. (Cal. Const., art. II, § 8(a).) Generally, any matter that is a proper subject of legislation can become an initiative measure; however, no initiative measure addressing more than one subject area may be submitted to the voters or have any effect. (Cal. Const., art. II, § 8(d).) An initiative measure is placed on the ballot after its proponents successfully satisfy the requirements described in this Guide, and it is qualified by the Secretary of State on the 131st day before a statewide general election.

For historical information regarding initiative measures, please refer to *The History of California Initiatives*, which is produced by the Secretary of State, and can be found on our website at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-measures/resources-and-historical-information/history-california-initiatives>. For current information about proposed initiative measures that are in circulation or initiative measures eligible for the next statewide ballot, please refer to our website at <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-measures/initiative-and-referendum-status/> or contact the Elections Division at (916) 657-2166.

Please note: This Guide is intended for statewide initiative measures only. For information regarding the qualification of local initiative measures, please contact your [local elections official](#).

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Chapter I

The Initiative Process

Step One - Writing the Proposed Initiative Measure

The first step in the process of qualifying an initiative measure is to write the text of the proposed law.

Proponent(s) may seek the assistance of their own private counsel to help draft the text of the proposed law, or they may choose to write the text themselves. The proposed initiative measure's proponent(s) may also obtain assistance from the Office of Legislative Counsel in drafting the language of the proposed law. Proponent(s) must submit a written request signed by 25 or more electors.¹ If the Legislative Counsel determines that there is a reasonable probability the proposed initiative measure will eventually be submitted to the voters, the Legislative Counsel will draft the proposed law. (Gov. Code, § 10243.)

Additionally, the proponent(s) can request the Secretary of State to review the provisions of the proposed initiative measure after it is prepared and prior to its circulation. Upon this request, the Secretary of State will review the measure with respect to form and language clarity and will request and obtain a statement of fiscal impact from the Legislative Analyst's Office. (Gov. Code, § 12172.)

For more information contact:

Office of Legislative Counsel
1021 O Street, Suite 3210
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 341-8000 / www.legislativecounsel.ca.gov

Secretary of State
Elections Division
1500 11th Street, 5th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 657-2166 / www.sos.ca.gov

Step Two - Request for Circulating Title and Summary

Written Request, Fee, Statement, and Certificate

Once the proposed initiative measure has been written, the proponent(s) must submit a printed copy of the text of the proposed initiative measure to the Attorney General with a written request that a circulating title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed initiative measure be prepared. (Elec. Code, § 9001(a),(d).) A facsimile or email will not be accepted. At the time of submitting the text of the proposed measure to the Attorney General, the proponent(s) must pay a fee of \$2,000. The \$2,000 fee is placed in a trust fund in the Office of the State Treasurer and is refunded if the initiative measure qualifies for the ballot within two years after the summary has been issued to the proponent(s). If the proposed initiative measure fails to qualify within that period, the fee is put into the General Fund of the State. (Elec. Code, § 9001(c).)

At the time the request for a circulating title and summary is submitted, each and every proponent must provide public contact information and an original signed certification that reads as follows (Elec. Code, § 9001(b)):

¹ An elector is a person who is a U.S. Citizen 18 years of age or older and is a resident of an election precinct in California on or before the day of an election. (Elections Code § 321.)

I, _____, declare under penalty of perjury that I am a citizen of the United States, 18 years of age or older, and a resident of _____ County, California.

Additionally, at the time the request for a circulating title and summary is submitted, the proponent(s) must also execute and submit a signed statement that reads as follows (Elec. Code, § 9608):

I, _____, acknowledge that it is a misdemeanor under state law (Section 18650 of the Elections Code) to knowingly or willfully allow the signatures on an initiative petition to be used for any purpose other than qualification of the proposed measure for the ballot. I certify that I will not knowingly or willfully allow the signatures for this initiative to be used for any purpose other than qualification of the measure for the ballot.

(Signature of Proponent)

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20 _____

This statement shall be kept on file at the Attorney General's Office for not less than eight months after the certification of the results of the election for which the measure qualified or, if the measure did not qualify, eight months after the deadline for submission of the petition to elections officials. (Elec. Code, § 9608(b).)

Once a request for a circulating title and summary has been submitted, the Attorney General's Office will post the text of the proposed initiative measure on their website and facilitate a 30-day public review process during which any member of the public may submit written public comments to the Attorney General's Office via their website. The Attorney General's Office will provide any written public comments received during the public review period to the proponent(s). (Elec. Code, § 9002(a).)

During the public review period, amendments signed by all of the proponent(s) may be submitted to the Attorney General's Office. Any amendments to the proposed initiative measure must be reasonably germane to the theme, purpose, or subject of the initiative measure as originally proposed. An amendment shall not be accepted more than five days after the public review period is concluded. (Elec. Code, § 9002(b).)

For more information contact:

Office of the Attorney General
ATTN: Initiative Coordinator
P.O. Box 944255
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550
(916) 210-6062 / www.oag.ca.gov

Circulating Title and Summary and Fiscal Estimate or Opinion

Upon receipt of the fee and request, and after the public review period, the Attorney General will prepare a circulating title and summary, which will be the official summary of the proposed initiative measure. (Elec. Code, § 9004(a).)

The Attorney General, in preparing a circulating title and summary, shall, in boldface print, include either the estimate of the amount of any increase or decrease in revenues or costs to the state or local government or an opinion as to whether or not a substantial net change in state or local finances would result. (Elec. Code, § 9005(a).) The Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst are required to jointly prepare this estimate within 50 days of the date of receipt of the proposed initiative measure by the Attorney General. If, in the opinion of both the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst, a reasonable estimate of the net impact of the proposed initiative measure cannot be prepared within the 50-day period, the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst shall, within the 50-day period, give the Attorney General their opinion as to whether or not a substantial net change in state or local finances would result if the proposed initiative measure is adopted. (Elec. Code, § 9005(b), (c).)

The Attorney General shall provide a copy of the circulating title and summary and its unique numeric identifier to the Secretary of State and the proponent(s) within 15 days after receipt of the fiscal estimate or opinion prepared by the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst. (Elec. Code, § 9004(b).) The date the copy is delivered or mailed to the proponent(s) is the “official summary date.” (Elec. Code, §§ 336, 9004(b).)

When the official circulating title and summary is complete, the Attorney General will send it and the text of the measure to the Senate and the Assembly. The Legislature may conduct public hearings on the proposed initiative measure but cannot amend it or prevent it from appearing on the ballot. (Elec. Code, § 9007.)

Official Summary Date

The official summary date, the date the circulating title and summary is sent to the proponent(s) by the Attorney General, is the date the Secretary of State uses to calculate calendar deadlines provided to the proponent(s) and elections officials. (Elec. Code, §§ 336, 9004.) **No petition may be circulated prior to the official summary date.** (Elec. Code, § 9014.)

Step Three – Format of Petitions

The format for the initiative petition is specified by law. County elections officials shall not receive or file petitions which do not comply with the Elections Code. (Elec. Code, § 9015.) A petition may have several sections. Each section of the petition must contain the Attorney General’s circulating title and summary and the full text of the proposed initiative measure. (Elec. Code, § 9012.) The Attorney General’s circulating title and summary shall be in at least 11-point roman type, and the full text of the proposed initiative measure shall be in at least 8-point type. Each page on which signatures are to appear must contain a copy of the Attorney General’s circulating title and summary and the unique numeric identifier provided by the Attorney General. (Elec. Code, §§ 9008, 9009, 9012.)

Official Top Funders Disclosure Requirements

For any initiative or referendum petition for which the circulation is paid for by a committee formed pursuant to Government Code section 82013, an Official Top Funders disclosure shall be included on the petition or in a separate document presented to a prospective signer of the petition.

County elections officials are not required to verify the accuracy of the information or to re-approve the petition upon any updates the committee makes. (Elec. Code, § 107(g).)

Official Top Funders Disclosure as a Separate Document

The Official Top Funders Sheet must be in 14-point black roman type on a plain, contrasting background, centered horizontally, except as described. The text shall not be condensed or have spacing between characters reduced to be narrower than a normal roman type. (Elec. Code, §§ 107(a)(1).)

The top of the sheet shall have the text “OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS. Valid only for”, followed by a month and year that starts at most seven days after the date the top contributors as defined in Government Code section 84501(c) were last confirmed. (Elec. Code, §107(a)(2).) This information shall be boldface and at least 16-point type. Next, separated by a blank horizontal line, shall be the title of the initiative or referendum as it appears on the petition, in all capital letters. (Elec. Code, § 107(a)(3).)

Next, separated by a blank horizontal line, shall appear a disclosure statement in a printed or drawn box with a black border. At the top of the disclosure statement shall appear, “Petition circulation paid for by” in boldface text. Next, on a separate horizontal line, shall appear the name of the committee as it appears on the most recent Statement of Organization filed pursuant to Government Code section 84101. If the committee has any top contributors as defined in Government Code section 84501(c), it shall be followed by a blank horizontal line and then the underlined text “Committee major funding from:”. The top contributors, as defined in Government Code section 84501(c), if any, shall be disclosed in boldface text on a separate horizontal line separate from any other text in descending order beginning with the top contributor who made the largest cumulative contributions. (Elec. Code, § 107(a)(4)(A)-(D).)

The committee, in its discretion, may include, in underlined text, “Endorsed by:” followed by a list, not underlined, of up to three endorsers. The text pursuant to this subparagraph shall be separated from the text above and below it by a blank horizontal line. (Elec. Code, § 107(a)(4)(E).)

The following line shall include the text “Latest Official Top Funders:” followed by either the internet web page on the Secretary of State’s internet website that lists the “Official Top Funders” statements that are reported pursuant to Elections Code section 107(f), or the internet web page on the internet website for any committee formed pursuant to Government Code section 82013 that pays for the circulation of an initiative or referendum petition. (Elec. Code, § 107(a)(4)(F).) The committee’s web page must include a prominent link to the most recent Official Top Funders sheet in a format that allows it to be viewed on an internet website and printed out on a single page of paper and a prominent link to the full text of the initiative or referendum. (Elec. Code, § 107(c).)

Next, separated by at least two blank horizontal lines shall appear the text “OFFICIAL TITLE AND SUMMARY (SAME AS ON PETITION)”, in boldface text in all capital letters. (Elec. Code, § 107(a)(5).) Starting on a separate horizontal line shall appear the text “The Attorney

General of California has prepared the following circulating title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:”, in boldface text with a type size of 11 point. (Elec. Code, § 107(a)(6).)

Lastly, starting on a separate horizontal line shall appear the Attorney General summary of the initiative as it appears on the initiative petition, in plain text with a type size of 11 point. (Elec. Code, § 107(a)(7).)

The Official Top Funders sheet, and any updates, must be submitted to the Secretary of State’s office and posted on the Secretary of State’s website. (Elec. Code, § 107(f).)

Official Top Funders Disclosure on the Petition

If the committee chooses to include the disclosure statement on the petition, the requirements are as follows:

The disclosure statement shall have a solid white background and shall be in a printed or drawn box with a black border and shall appear before that portion of the petition for voters’ signatures, printed names, and residence addresses. The text in the disclosure area shall be in a black Arial equivalent type with a type size of at least 10 point, with all lines centered horizontally in the disclosure area. (Elec. Code, § 107(b)(1).)

The top of the disclosure shall include the text “OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS. Valid only for”, followed by a month and year that starts at most seven days after the date the top contributors as defined in Government Code section 84501(c) were last confirmed. The text of this paragraph shall be boldface. (Elec. Code, § 107(b)(2).)

Next shall appear, on a separate horizontal line, the text “Petition circulation paid for by”, followed by the name of the committee as it appears on the most recent Statement of Organization filed pursuant to Government Code section 84101. If the committee has any top contributors as defined in Government Code section 84501(c), it shall be followed by, on a separate horizontal line, the underlined text “Committee major funding from:”. (Elec. Code, § 107(b)(3).)

The top contributors as defined in Government Code section 84501(c), if any, shall each be disclosed in boldface text on a separate horizontal line separate from any other text, in descending order, beginning with the top contributor who made the largest cumulative contributions, as defined in Government Code section 84501(b), on the first line. (Elections Code § 107(b)(4).)

The committee, in its discretion, may include the underlined text “Endorsed by:”, followed by a list, not underlined, of up to three endorsers. The text in this paragraph shall be separated from the text above and below it by a blank horizontal line. (Elec. Code, § 107(b)(5).) The following line shall include the text “Latest info:” followed by the URL for either the internet web page on the Secretary of State’s internet website that lists the “Official Top Funders” statements and any updates provided by the committee to the Secretary of State, or the internet website of any committee formed pursuant to Government Code section 82013 that pays for the circulation of an initiative petition. The text specified in this paragraph shall be underlined. (Elec. Code, § 107(b)(6).) The committee’s web page must include a prominent link to the most recent Official Top Funders sheet in a format that allows it to be viewed on an internet website and printed out on a single page of paper. It must also include a prominent link to the full text of the initiative. (Elec. Code, § 107(c).)

Heading

The heading of each section of a proposed initiative petition shall be in the following form and must be printed in 11-point or larger roman boldface type (Elec. Code, §§ 9008, 9009):

“INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY TO THE VOTERS”

Circulating Title and Summary

Immediately after the heading on a separate line, insert the following statement in 11-point or larger boldface type:

“The Attorney General of California has prepared the following circulating title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:”

Next, include the unique numeric identifier provided by the Attorney General followed by the circulating title and summary prepared by the Attorney General. The circulating title shall appear in all capital letters. The unique numeric identifier and title and summary must also be printed in 11-point or larger roman type across the top of each page of the petition upon which signatures are to appear. (Elec. Code, §§ 9008, 9009.)

Text of the Proposed Initiative Measure

The text of the proposed initiative measure must be inserted immediately following the unique numeric identifier and circulating title and summary prepared by the Attorney General, which is preceded by the following statement (Elec. Code, §§ 9008, 9009):

“To the Honorable Secretary of State of California

We, the undersigned, registered, qualified voters of California, residents of _____ County (or City and County), hereby propose amendments to [(the Constitution of California) (the _____ Code, relating to _____)] and petition the Secretary of State to submit the same to the voters of California for their adoption or rejection at the next succeeding general election or at any special statewide election held prior to that general election or as otherwise provided by law. The proposed [(constitutional) (statutory)] amendments read as follows:”

[Insert full circulating title and summary and text of the measure.]

Signature Section

Above the portion of the petition where voters are to sign, a notice in 11-point boldface type must appear containing the following statement (Elec. Code, § 101):

“NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:”

If the petition includes the Official Top Funders disclosure statement, the following text must appear next in 11-point boldface type:

“SIGN ONLY IF IT IS THE SAME MONTH SHOWN IN THE OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS OR YOU SAW AN “OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS” SHEET FOR THIS MONTH.”

Next must appear on all petitions the following in 11-point non-boldface type:

“THIS PETITION MAY BE CIRCULATED BY A PAID SIGNATURE GATHERER OR A VOLUNTEER. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK.

THE PROPONENTS OF THIS PROPOSED INITIATIVE MEASURE HAVE THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW THIS PETITION AT ANY TIME BEFORE THE MEASURE QUALIFIES FOR THE BALLOT.”

If the petition does not include the disclosure statement described in Elections Code section 107(b), the following text shall appear on a separate horizontal line below the signer’s printed name and above the signer’s signature (Elec. Code, § 9020):

“**DO NOT SIGN UNLESS** you have seen Official Top Funders sheet and its month is still valid.”

The text “**DO NOT SIGN UNLESS**” must be in all capitals and in boldface. The other text shall be capitalized as shown and not bolded.

The petition must have room for the signature of each petition signer as well as the signer’s printed name, residence address, and city or unincorporated community name. Signature spaces must be consecutively numbered commencing with the number 1 for each petition section. A minimum one-inch space shall be left at the top of each page and after the name of each voter who has signed the petition for use by the county elections official. (Elec. Code, §§ 100, 9013.)

Pursuant to the California Supreme Court’s decision in *Assembly v. Deukmejian* (1982) 30 Cal.3d 638, 180 Cal. Rptr. 297, the petition form must direct signers to include their “residence address” rather than “address as registered” or other address. Each section of the petition must also contain the name of the county (or city and county) in which it was circulated. Each section shall be circulated among voters of only one county. See Appendix D for a sample petition.

Step Four – Circulating Petitions and Gathering Signatures

Calendar

Based on the official summary date, the Secretary of State will prepare a calendar of filing deadlines. The Secretary of State will send a copy of the calendar to the proponent(s) and the county elections officials within one business day of receiving the circulating title and summary from the Attorney General’s Office. (Elec. Code, § 9004(c).)

Circulation Period

Proponents of an initiative measure are allowed a maximum of 180 days from the official summary date to circulate petitions, collect signatures, and file petitions with county elections officials. (Elec. Code, § 9014.) If the petition reaches the number of valid signatures required, it will be eligible for the next statewide general election held at least 131 days after it qualifies or at any special statewide election held prior to that general election. (Elec. Code, §§ 9016, 9033; Cal. Const., art. II, § 8(c).) Should proponent(s) wish to qualify for a particular election, they may want to shorten the 180-day circulation period in order to ensure that the proposed initiative measure is certified at least 131 days before that particular election.

Required Number of Signatures

In order to qualify for the ballot, an initiative petition must be signed by a specified number of registered voters depending on the type of proposed initiative measure submitted.

Initiative Statute: Petitions proposing initiative statutes must be signed by registered voters. The number of signatures must be equal to at least 5% of the total votes cast for the office of Governor at the last gubernatorial election. (Cal. Const., art. II, § 8(b); Elec. Code, § 9035.)

The total number of signatures required for initiative statutes is **546,651**.

Initiative Constitutional Amendment: Petitions proposing initiative constitutional amendments must be signed by registered voters. The number of signatures must be equal to at least 8% of the total votes cast for the office of Governor at the last gubernatorial election. (Cal. Const., art. II, § 8(b); Elec. Code, § 9035.)

The total number of signatures required for such petitions is **874,641**.

Once proponents have gathered 25% of the number of signatures required (136,663 for an initiative statute and 218,661 for an initiative constitutional amendment), proponents(s) must immediately certify they have done so under penalty of perjury to the Secretary of State. (Elec. Code, § 9034(a).) Upon receipt of the certification, the Secretary of State will provide copies of the proposed initiative measure and the circulating title and summary to the State Senate and Assembly. Each house is required to assign the proposed initiative measure to its appropriate committees and hold joint public hearings at least 131 days before the date of the election at which the measure is to be voted on. (Elec. Code, § 9034(b).) However, the Legislature cannot amend the proposed initiative measure or prevent it from appearing on the ballot. (Elec. Code, § 9034(c).) See Appendix F for an example of the certification to be sent by proponent(s) to the Secretary of State.

Referendum

Pursuant to Article II, Section 9, of the California Constitution, the referendum is the power of the electors to approve or reject statutes enacted by the Legislature. However, the referendum cannot be used on urgency statutes, statutes calling elections, or statutes providing for tax levies or appropriations for current expenses of the State.

Referenda on the ballot are not as common as initiative measures. The signature requirements for a referendum and an initiative statute are the same—at least 5% of the total votes cast for the office of Governor at the last gubernatorial election. (Cal. Const., art. II, § 9(b).)

The total number of valid signatures required to qualify a referendum for the ballot is **546,651**.

Some of the requirements for a referendum measure are different from the requirements for an initiative measure. For example, the Attorney General is allowed 10 days to prepare the circulating title and summary for a referendum. (Elections Code section 9006(b).) Additionally, a proponent has only 90 days from the date of the enactment of a bill (or in the case of a redistricting map, the date a final map is certified to the Secretary of State) to request and receive a circulating title and summary from the Attorney General, circulate petitions, gather the required number of valid signatures, and file the petitions with the county elections officials.

For more information about referenda, please visit www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-measures/referendum/.

Summary of Initiative and Referendum Signature Requirements for Statewide General Election 2026:

Total Votes Cast for Governor in 2022	Initiative Statute: 5%	Initiative Constitutional Amendment: 8%	Referendum: 5%
10,933,018	546,651	874,641	546,651

Declaration of Circulator

A circulator of a state initiative must be 18 years of age or older. Each section shall have attached thereto a declaration by the circulator of the petition setting forth, in the circulator's own hand, the following (Elec. Code, §§ 102, 104, 9022):

- The printed name of the circulator.
- The residence address of the circulator, giving street and number, or if no street or number exists, adequate designation of residence so that the location may be readily ascertained.
- The dates between which all the signatures affixed to the petition were obtained. Preprinted dates or generalized dates, other than the particular range of dates during which the petition section was actually circulated, are not allowed. (*Assembly v. Deukmejian* (1982) 30 Cal.3d 638, 180 Cal.Rptr. 297.)

Each declaration submitted pursuant to this section shall also set forth the following (Elec. Code, §§ 104, 9022):

- That the circulator is 18 years of age or older.
- That the circulator circulated the petition section and witnessed the appended signatures being written.
- That according to the best information and belief of the circulator, each signature is the genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be.
- That the declaration is true and correct under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California.
- If the petition does not include the Official Top Funders disclosure statement, that the circulator showed each signer a valid and unfalsified "Official Top Funders" sheet.

The declaration must be signed under penalty of perjury. The declaration does not need to be sworn before a notary public or other officer authorized to administer oaths, but must include the circulator's signature, date, and place of signing preceding the circulator's signature. (Elec. Code, §§ 104, 9022; Code Civ. Proc. § 2015.5.)

Petition Circulators

The proponent(s) of a proposed initiative measure are required to ensure that any person, company, or other organization who solicits signatures to qualify the initiative measure, whether they are paid or volunteer, receives instruction on the requirements and prohibitions imposed by state law with respect to the circulation of petitions and the gathering of signatures. Such instructions must emphasize the prohibition of the use of signatures on an initiative petition for a purpose other than qualification of the proposed measure for the ballot. (Elec. Code, § 9607.)

The petition may be circulated by a number of individuals carrying separate, identical parts of the petition called sections. Each petition circulator who obtains signatures must complete the attached declaration to the petition.

Prior to allowing a person to circulate an initiative petition for signatures, **the person, company official, or other organizational officer who is in charge of signature gathering shall execute and submit** to the proponent(s) a signed statement that reads as follows (Elec. Code, § 9609):

I, _____, acknowledge that it is a misdemeanor under state law (Section 18650 of the Elections Code) to knowingly or willfully allow the signatures on an initiative petition to be used for any purpose other than qualification of the proposed measure for the ballot. I certify that I will not knowingly or willfully allow the signatures for this initiative to be used for any purpose other than qualification of the measure for the ballot.

(Signature of Official)

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20____

This statement shall be kept on file by the proponent(s) for not less than eight months after the certification of the results of the election for which the petition qualified or, if the measure did not qualify, eight months after the deadline for submission of the petition to elections officials. (Elec. Code, § 9609(b).)

In addition, **all paid circulators shall execute and submit** to the person, company official, or other organizational officer who is in charge of signature gathering a signed statement, prior to soliciting signatures on an initiative petition, that reads as follows (Elec. Code, § 9610):

I, _____, acknowledge that it is a misdemeanor under state law (Section 18650 of the Elections Code) to knowingly or willfully allow the signatures on an initiative petition to be used for any purpose other than qualification of the proposed measure for the ballot. I certify that I will not knowingly or willfully allow the signatures for this initiative to be used for any purpose other than qualification of the measure for the ballot.

(Signature of Circulator)

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20____

This statement shall be kept on file by the person, company official, or other organizational officer who is in charge of signature gathering for not less than eight months after the certification of the results of the election for which the petition qualified or, if the measure did not qualify, eight months after the deadline for submission of the petition to elections officials. Unpaid circulators do not need to provide a signed statement. (Elec. Code, §§ 9610(b), (c).)

Petition Signatures

Only persons who are registered, qualified voters at the time of signing are entitled to sign the petition. A person can only sign a petition that is being circulated in their county of registration. If a petition circulator is a registered voter, the person may sign the petition the person is

circulating. (Elec. Code, §§ 106, 9020, 9021.) Each signer must personally place on the petition the person's signature, printed name, residence address (or physical description of the location if there is no street address), and the name of the incorporated city or unincorporated community. (Elec. Code, § 100.) None of the above may be preprinted on the petition. Each signer may sign an initiative petition only once. (Elec. Code, § 18612.)

Withdrawal of Signatures

Any voter who has signed an initiative petition may withdraw their name by filing a written request for the withdrawal with the appropriate county elections official prior to the date the petition is filed by the proponent(s). This written request must include the name or title of the petition and the voter's name, residence address, and signature. (Elec. Code, §§ 103, 9602.)

Withdrawal of Initiative Measure

The proponent(s) of an initiative may withdraw their measure at any time before the initiative qualifies for the ballot on the 131st day before the statewide general election. (Elec. Code, §§ 9033, 9604.)

- The proponent(s) may withdraw their measure at any time before filing the petition with the appropriate elections official, effective upon receipt by the Secretary of State of a written notice of withdrawal signed by all proponents of the measure. (Elec. Code, § 9604(a).)
- An initiative may also be withdrawn after filing the petition with the appropriate elections official, but before the Secretary of State certifies that the measure has qualified for the ballot on the 131st day before the statewide general election. Such a withdrawal would be effective upon receipt by the Secretary of State of a written notice of withdrawal, signed by a majority of the proponents, no later than 5 p.m. on the day the Secretary of State certifies that the measure has qualified for the ballot. (Elec. Code, §§ 9033, 9604(b),(d).)

Contingent Withdrawal of Initiative Measure

The proponent(s) of an initiative may also file a written notice of withdrawal with the Secretary of State that is contingent upon the enactment of a particular legislative measure. (Elec. Code, § 9604.)

- An initiative may also be conditionally withdrawn after filing with the appropriate elections official, but before the Secretary of State certifies that the measure has qualified for the ballot on the 131st day before the statewide general election. Such a conditional withdrawal shall be filed no later than 5 p.m. on the day the Secretary of State certifies that the measure has qualified for the ballot. (Elec. Code, §§ 9033, 9604(c),(d).)
- In the contingent withdrawal notice, the proponents shall identify the publication date of the most recent version of the legislative measure upon which the withdrawal is contingent. The Secretary of State shall reject a contingent notice of withdrawal if the contingency relates to any action other than the enactment of a specified legislative measure. (Elec. Code, § 9604(c)(1).)
- A notice of contingent withdrawal is effective only if the legislative measure identified in the notice is given a chapter number by the Secretary of State prior to the certification of the initiative as qualified for the ballot. (Elec. Code, §§ 9033, 9604(c)(2).) If the legislative measure is not chaptered or is amended after the notice of contingent

withdrawal is filed, the conditional withdrawal of the initiative measure will not be given effect. Elec. Code, § 9604(c)(3).)

- If a contingent withdrawal fails, the proponents may file a new notice of contingent withdrawal at any time before the Secretary of State certifies the measure as qualified for the ballot. (Elec. Code, § 9604(c)(3).)
- The proponents of a initiative measure may cancel a notice of contingent withdrawal by filing a written notice with the Secretary of State at any time before the legislative measure identified in the contingent withdrawal notice is enacted and given a chapter number by the Secretary of State. (Elec. Code, § 9604(c)(4).)
- A contingent withdrawal or a cancellation of a contingent withdrawal must be signed by at least a majority of the proponents of an initiative measure. (Elec. Code, § 9604(c)(5).)
- A notice of withdrawal takes precedence over any notice of contingent withdrawal on file with the Secretary of State. (Elec. Code, § 9604(c)(6).)

Criminal Penalties

The Elections Code imposes certain criminal penalties for abuses related to the circulation of initiative petitions. It prohibits circulators from intentionally misrepresenting or intentionally making any false statement concerning the contents, purport, or effect of the petition, or the petition's Official Top Funders disclosure, to potential petition signers; intentionally making a false statement in response to a voter's inquiry as to whether the circulator is a paid signature gatherer or a volunteer; and from refusing to allow prospective signers to read the proposed initiative measure or petition or Attorney General's summary. (Elec. Code, §§ 18600 - 18602.) No person may offer or give payment or anything of value to another in exchange for signing an initiative petition. (Elec. Code, § 18603.) The Code also makes circulators, signers, and others criminally liable for signing or soliciting to sign false, forged, fictitious, or ineligible signatures and names. (Elec. Code, §§ 18610 - 18614.) The law provides criminal penalties for persons, including public officials, companies, organizations, or organizational officers, who make false affidavits concerning an initiative, referendum, or recall petition.

Criminal penalties may be issued if one knowingly directs an affiant to make a false affidavit or if one knows or reasonably should have known that an affiant has made a false affidavit. (Elec. Code, §§ 18660, 18661.)

Circulating petitions is prohibited within 100 feet of a polling place, an elections official's office on election day, or at any time that a voter is casting a ballot. (Elec. Code, § 18370(a).) The law prohibits any person from soliciting or obtaining money or anything of value to aid in unlawfully stopping circulation or the filing of a proposed initiative measure or for withdrawing a proposed initiative measure after filing it with an elections official. (Elec. Code, §§ 18620 - 18622.) The law also prohibits any person from stealing petitions and from threatening petition circulators or circulators' relatives with the intent to dissuade them from circulating the petition. (Elec. Code, §§ 18630, 18631.) Any person who is paid by the proponent(s) to obtain signatures on any initiative petition is subject to severe penalties for failing to surrender the petition to the proponent(s) for filing. (Elec. Code, § 18640.)

The petition or list of signatures may be used for no purpose other than the qualification of the initiative measure. (Elec. Code, § 18650.) This requirement prohibits using the names and addresses on petition sections for a mailing list for fundraising or other purposes.

Step Five – Turning in Signatures

Once the requisite number of signatures has been collected, the petition is filed with the appropriate county elections official(s). Petitions may be submitted in sections; however, all the sections submitted in a single county must be filed at the same time and must contain signatures of registered voters in that particular county. Once filed, petitions may not be amended except by order of a court of competent jurisdiction. (Elec. Code, § 9030.)

To prevent unauthorized petitions from circulating and unauthorized persons from filing petitions, only the proponent(s) of a proposed initiative measure, and persons authorized in writing by one or more of the proponents, may file initiative petitions. Any other petitions submitted will be disregarded by the county elections official of the county (or city and county) in which it was circulated. (Elec. Code, § 9032.)

Recommendations

In previous years, some proponents have experienced problems in submitting initiative petitions by the statutory deadline to qualify the initiative measure for a particular election. The proponent(s) are encouraged to begin the process as early as possible to ensure that all deadlines are met. The following points, previously mentioned in this Guide, should be emphasized:

- In addition to statutory deadlines, allowances must be made for transmittal of information since many of the time limitations begin when the proposed initiative measure is received by the office and not when sent. Therefore, transmittal time could add several days to the process.
- The Legislative Analyst and the Department of Finance are allowed a total of 50 days from the date of receipt by the Attorney General of the proposed initiative measure in order to prepare a fiscal estimate or opinion.
- The Attorney General is then allowed 15 days after receipt of the fiscal estimate or opinion prepared by the Legislative Analyst and the Department of Finance to transmit a copy of the circulating title and summary.
- Proponent(s) have a maximum of 180 days from the official summary date to file the completed and signed petition sections with the appropriate county elections officials.
- Should proponent(s) wish to qualify for a particular election, they may want to shorten the 180-day circulation period in order to ensure that the proposed initiative measure is certified at least 131 days before that particular election.
- An eligible initiative measure will be qualified by the Secretary of State on the 131st day prior to the next statewide general election unless the proposed initiative measure is withdrawn by the proponent(s) prior to qualification.
- Please see Appendix A – Suggested Deadlines to Qualify Initiatives – for an overview of suggested timelines and dates involved in qualifying an initiative for the November 3, 2026, Statewide General Election.

Chapter II

Verification of Signatures

Raw Count

Within eight working days (excluding weekends and holidays) after the filing of the petition, the county elections officials will determine the total number of signatures on the petition sections submitted in their county and report the total to the Secretary of State. If the Secretary of State determines that the *raw count* of signatures on petitions submitted throughout the state lacks 100 percent of the signatures required², the Secretary of State shall notify the proponent(s) and the county elections officials of the failure of the proposed initiative measure, and no further action will be taken on that petition. If the raw count equals 100 percent or more of the total number of signatures needed to qualify the initiative measure, the Secretary of State will immediately notify the county elections officials that a *random sample* will be necessary. (Elec. Code, § 9030(b),(c).)

Random Sample

If a random sample is necessary, within 30 working days of receipt of the Secretary of State's random sample notification, the county elections officials will verify the validity of the signatures filed with their office using a random sampling technique of verification. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, § 20521.) The elections official is required to verify at least 500 signatures or three percent of the number of signatures filed in their county, whichever is greater. Counties receiving less than 500 petition signatures are required to verify all the signatures filed in their county. (Elec. Code, § 9030(d).)

Upon completion of a random sample, the county elections officials will immediately certify to the Secretary of State the number of valid signatures appearing on the petitions that were filed in their counties. (Elec. Code, § 9030(e).) The Secretary of State then applies a formula to determine the projected statewide total of valid signatures. (Elec. Code, § 9030; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 2, §§ 20530-20532, 20540.)

Under 95 Percent

If the total number of valid signatures is projected to be **less than 95 percent** of the number of signatures required to qualify the initiative measure, the proposed initiative measure fails to qualify for the ballot. The Secretary of State will generate a failure notice and mail a copy to the proponent(s) and county elections officials. (Elec. Code, § 9030(f).)

Over 110 Percent

If the number of valid signatures is projected to be **greater than 110 percent** of the required number of signatures, the Secretary of State will be able to certify that the initiative measure is eligible for the next statewide general election held at least 131 days later. (Elec. Code, §§ 9030(g), 9033.) Once the proposed initiative measure is eligible for qualification, the Secretary of State will immediately notify the proponents and transmit a notice to county elections officials that signature verification be terminated. (Elec. Code, § 9033(a).)

² See signature requirements on pages 8-9.

Between 95 Percent and 110 Percent

If the number of valid signatures is projected to be between **95 percent and 110 percent** of the required number of signatures, the Secretary of State notifies county elections officials to verify every signature on the petition. This process is referred to as a “*full check*.” (Elec. Code, § 9031(a).)

Full Check

If a full check of signatures is necessary, within 60 business days of receipt of the Secretary of State’s full check notification, the county elections officials determine the total number of qualified signatures and transmit this information to the Secretary of State. If the proposed initiative measure fails to reach the required number of valid signatures, the initiative fails to qualify for the ballot, and the Secretary of State must so notify the proponent(s) and county elections officials. (Elec. Code, § 9031.) If it is determined that the proposed initiative measure has the required number of valid signatures, the Secretary of State will be able to certify that the measure is eligible for the next statewide general election ballot held at least 131 days later. (Elec. Code, § 9031(e)(1).) For more information about the Full Check signature verification method, see Appendix A of this Guide.

Signature Verification Process

Information regarding the signature verification process can be found in California Code of Regulations section 20960 and is available on the Secretary of State’s website at: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/signature-verification-ballot-processing-and-ballot-counting-emergency-regulations#20960>.

Note: Signatures are not invalid solely because the Top Funders information was missing or inaccurate.

Chapter III

Qualification

Qualifying for the Ballot: Eligible vs. Qualified

Eligible for the Ballot

The proposed initiative measure is eligible for the ballot on the date the Secretary of State receives certificates from one or more of the county elections officials showing the petition has been signed by the requisite number of voters. (Elec. Code, § 9033(a).)

Once the proposed initiative measure is eligible for the ballot, the Secretary of State will notify the proponent(s) and each county elections official that the signature requirement has been met and signature verification be terminated. (Elec. Code, § 9033(a).)

Proponents may withdraw the proposed initiative measure at any time prior to its qualification for the ballot on the 131st day before the next statewide general election. (Elec. Code, §§ 9033, 9604.)

Qualified for the Ballot

Once the petition signatures have been verified and the initiative is eligible for the ballot, the Secretary of State will issue a certificate of qualification on the 131st day before the next statewide general election certifying that the initiative measure, as of that date, is qualified for the ballot. (Elec. Code, § 9033(b).)

Chapter IV

Additional Information

Initiative Effective Date if Approved by Voters

An initiative measure approved by a majority vote takes effect the fifth day after the Secretary of State certifies the election results, unless the initiative measure provides otherwise. (Cal. Const., art. II, § 10(a).) If the provisions of two or more measures approved at the same election conflict, those of the measure receiving the highest affirmative vote shall prevail. (Cal. Const., art. II, § 10(b).) The Legislature may amend or repeal an initiative statute by another statute; however, any proposed statute becomes effective only when approved by the voters, unless the initiative statute permits amendment or repeal without voter approval. (Cal. Const., art. II, § 10(c).)

Preservation of Signatures

The county elections officials must preserve initiative petitions until eight months after the certification of the results of the election for which the initiative measure qualified or, if the measure was not submitted to the voters, eight months after the final examination of the petition by the elections official. (Elec. Code, § 17200.) The petitions shall then be destroyed unless any of the following conditions are present: 1) the petition is evidence in a pending legal action or legal proceeding, 2) the elections official receives a written request from a governmental agency that the petition be preserved for use in an investigation regarding the petition, or 3) the proponents have commenced an examination of the petition in which case the petition shall be preserved for one year from the date the proponents last examined the petition. (Elec. Code, § 17200; Gov. Code, § 7924.110.) As a general rule, initiative petitions, once filed with the county elections officials, are not public records and are not open to the general public for inspection. (Gov. Code, § 7924.110.)

Chapter V

Political Reform Act, Forming Committees and Reporting Requirements

Recipient Committees

Any person or combination of persons is considered to be a “*recipient committee*” if contributions totaling \$2,000 or more have been received in a calendar year. (Gov. Code, § 82013(a).) A recipient committee becomes “qualified” and must file the original Statement of Organization (Form 410) with the Secretary of State's Political Reform Division within ten days of reaching the \$2,000 threshold. (Gov. Code, § 84101(a).) In addition, recipient committees must also file a copy of the Statement of Organization with the local filing officer, if any, with whom it is required to file the originals of its campaign reports.

Qualified recipient committees are subject to a \$50 annual fee, payable within 15 days of filing the Statement of Organization (Form 410). After paying the initial fee, the committee must pay the fee, thereafter, on or before January 15 of each year, in every year that the committee remains active until the committee terminates. (Gov. Code, § 84101.5.)

Use of Measure Committee Funds

Persons or committees receiving money for promoting or defeating an initiative or referendum petition, or any measure that has qualified for the ballot, must hold the money in trust and may spend the money only for the purpose for which it was entrusted to them. (Elec. Code, § 18680.)

Official Top Funders Sheet

Committees formed pursuant to Government Code section 82013 that pay for the circulation of a state initiative or referendum petition are required to create an Official Top Funders sheet, as defined in Elections Code section 107, and provide it to the Secretary of State's office for posting on the Secretary of State's website. The sheet must be added to the petition above the signature section or accompany the petition. (Elec. Code, § 9020(a)(5).) A sample of the Official Top Funders disclosure on the petition is located in Appendix D, and a sample of an Official Top Funders Disclosure sheet is located in Appendix E.

Campaign Disclosure Form 460

The Recipient Committee Campaign Disclosure Statement (Form 460) is the proper disclosure form for use by all ballot measure committees in disclosing most of their financial activities.

Measure Committee Reporting Duties

Committees formed or existing primarily to support or oppose the qualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot measure and proponent(s) of a state ballot measure who control a committee formed to support the qualification, passage, or defeat of a state ballot measure must file semi-annual statements, pre-election statements, quarterly ballot measure statements, and 24-hour online reports of contributions totaling \$1,000 or more, as well as 10-business-day reports of

contributions totaling \$5,000 or more, when required. (Gov. Code, §§ 84202.3, 84203, 84204, and 85309(d).) Semi-annual Statements Committees must file semi-annual statements for each half of every year, regardless of the amount of contributions or level of activity. The closing dates for reporting activity on such semi-annual statements are June 30 (with the report due July 31) and December 31 (with the report due January 31). (Gov. Code, § 84200(a).)

Note: All state filers whose cumulative receipts or expenditures total \$25,000 or more are subject to electronic filing requirements. The period for calculating whether the committee has reached the cumulative \$25,000 electronic filing threshold began on January 1, 2000. For a committee that is subject to this title after January 1, 2000, the beginning date for calculating cumulative totals is the date that the committee is first subject to this title. (Gov. Code, § 84605(a)(2).)

Pre-election Statements

Two pre-election statements must be filed during the six-month period prior to the election at which the measure will appear on the ballot. Reporting periods correspond to activity occurring from the ending date of the last reporting period (usually a semi-annual report) through 45 days before an election (with the report due 40 days before the election), and activity occurring from the ending date of the last reporting period (usually the first pre-election report) through 17 days before the election (with reports due 12 days before the election). (Gov. Code, §§ 84200.5(a), 84200.8.)

Quarterly Ballot Measure Statements

Committees primarily formed to support or oppose the qualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot measure and proponents of a state ballot measure who control a committee formed to support the qualification, passage, or defeat of a state ballot measure are required to file quarterly ballot measure statements. However, quarterly statements are not required during any semi-annual period in which the committee is required to file pre-election statements. Following the election at which the measure is voted upon, such committees that do not terminate are only required to file semi-annual statements, unless they make contributions or expenditures to support or oppose the qualification or passage of another ballot measure, in which case they would have to file quarterly statements. (Gov. Code, § 84202.3.)

10-Business Day and 24-Hour Reports

There are two types of expedited contribution reports that must be filed. Both must be filed electronically only. No paper copy of these electronic reports must be filed.

Each report is triggered by a distinct threshold of total contributions (\$5,000 or \$1,000) given and/or received during a distinct period of time (before or during the 90-day period before or on Election Day), and each has a distinct deadline for filing the report (10 business days, or 24 hours).

The first type of expedited contribution report (Form 497), required to be filed by electronic filers only (filers who have reached the \$25,000 threshold of activity requiring electronic filing of other reports), must be filed within 10 business days of the date on which a committee receives contributions totaling \$5,000 or more from a single source at any time during the year, **unless** the contribution or contributions are received during the 90 days before or on the Election Day when the measure appears on the ballot. During the 90-day period before or on Election Day, the second type of expedited reporting is required. (Gov. Code, § 85309(d).)

The second type of expedited contribution report (also using the Form 497), required to be filed by all ballot measure committees listed on the upcoming election ballot, must be filed by the

next business day of the date on which a committee receives contributions totaling \$1,000 or more from a single source 90 days before or on Election Day, **unless** the contribution is received on the Friday or weekend day before the Election Day, in which case it must be reported within 24 hours of the date on which a committee receives the contribution.

Contributions of \$1,000 or more in the aggregate that are made in connection with a candidate or another ballot measure being voted on in the upcoming election or that are made to a political party committee, also require the above second type of expedited report. Independent expenditures fall under the above second type of expedited report. (Gov. Code, §§ 84203, 84204.)

Paid Spokesperson Reports

Committees are required to file Paid Spokesperson reports (Form 511) within 10 days of making payments to individuals to appear in advertisements that support or oppose the qualification, passage or defeat of a ballot measure, if the individual is paid \$5,000 or more to appear in the ad, **or** the individual is paid any amount of money to appear in an ad that states or suggests the individual is a member of an occupation that requires licensure, certification, or other specialized, documented training as a prerequisite to engage in the occupation represented in the ad. (Gov. Code, § 84511.)

Termination Requirements

The Statement of Organization (Form 410) is used to terminate recipient committees. The original and one copy must be filed with the Secretary of State's Political Reform Division. In addition, a copy of the Form 410 must be filed with each filing officer who received a copy of the committee's last campaign statement as contained in California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 18404(c).

The committee is also required to file a final, terminating campaign disclosure statement (Form 460).

For more information contact:

Secretary of State
Political Reform Division
1500 11th Street, Fourth Floor, Room 495
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 653-6224
Website: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/campaign-lobbying/>

Fair Political Practices Commission
1102 Q Street, Suite 3050
Sacramento, CA 95811
General Contact Line: (916) 322-5660
Advice Line: : (866) 275-3772 *1
Website: www.fppc.ca.gov

For additional information regarding all filing requirements, the Fair Political Practices Commission publishes online filing schedules specific to each election cycle and specific to each type of committee at www.fppc.ca.gov under "Campaign Rules, Forms & Manuals."

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APPENDIX A

Suggested Deadlines to Qualify Initiatives

Appendix A: Suggested Deadlines to Qualify Initiatives

The calendar of suggested deadlines included below serves as a guide for proponent(s). The calendar sets forth required action items and associated dates in the initiative process. Please note that the following calendar is not a substitute for California election laws, regulations, or policy. Proponent(s) are responsible for ensuring that all required documents are submitted in accordance with established statutory deadlines and dates. Other factors, such as amending the proposed initiative measure before circulation or the length of time for circulation, will affect the time it takes to complete the process.

Please note that initiative measures can only qualify to appear on the ballot at a general election or a special statewide election. (Cal. Const., art. II, §§ 8(c), 9(c); Elec. Code, § 9016(a).)

Overview of Qualification Methods: Verification of Signatures by Random Sample vs Full Check

Random Sample Method

A random sampling technique of signature verification is required once the Secretary of State determines that the raw count of signatures equals 100 percent or more of the total number of signatures required to qualify the initiative measure. In conducting a random sample, each elections official is required to verify at least 500 signatures or three percent of the number of signatures filed in their office, whichever is greater. If an elections official receives fewer than 500 petition signatures they are required to verify all the signatures filed in their office. (Elec. Code, § 9030.)

If upon completion of the random sample, the Secretary of State determines that the number of valid signatures has exceeded 110 percent or more of the total number of signatures needed to qualify, the Secretary of State will notify the counties and proponent(s) that the initiative is eligible to appear on the next statewide general election ballot at least 131 days later, and signature verification will terminate.

Full Check Method

The “full check” signature verification method must be used if, following the random sample, the number of valid signatures falls between 95 percent and 110 percent. The Secretary of State will then direct county elections officials to verify every signature on the petition filed with their office. The full check will add an additional 60 business days to the initiative process, as county elections officials determine the total number of qualified signatures and transmit this information to the Secretary of State within this allotted time period. If, upon completion of the full check, it is determined that the proposed initiative has the required number of valid signatures, the initiative is eligible for the next statewide general election at least 131 days later. (Elec. Code, § 9031.)

The time frames for both qualification methods are provided on the following pages.

November 3, 2026, General Election Qualifying Using the Random Sample Method

Wednesday, August 13, 2025 – Suggested last day for proponent(s) to submit proposed measure to the Attorney General and request a circulating title and summary.

Friday, October 17, 2025 – Last day for Attorney General to prepare and issue the circulating title and summary (includes time allotted for fiscal estimate); proponent(s) may begin circulation of the petition.

Friday, April 17, 2026 – Last day for proponent(s) to file the petition with county elections officials.

Thursday, April 30, 2026 – Last day for county elections officials to complete raw count totals and certify raw numbers to the Secretary of State.

Wednesday, May 6, 2026 – Last day for Secretary of State to determine whether the initiative petition meets the minimum signature requirement and, if the minimum signature requirement has been met, to notify counties to verify a random sampling of signatures.

Thursday, June 18, 2026 – Last day for county elections officials to verify and certify results of the random sampling of signatures to the Secretary of State.

Thursday, June 25, 2026 (E-131) – Last day for Secretary of State to determine that the measure qualifies for the ballot or a full check is necessary. At this point, if a full check is necessary, the measure would not be eligible for the November 3, 2026, General Election ballot.

Tuesday, November 3, 2026 – General Election Day

November 3, 2026, General Election Qualifying Using the Full Check Method

Monday, May 12, 2025 – Suggested last day for proponent(s) to submit proposed measure to the Attorney General and request a circulating title and summary.

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 – Last day for Attorney General to prepare and issue the circulating title and summary (includes time allotted for fiscal estimate); proponent(s) may begin circulation of the petition.

Monday, January 12, 2026 – Last day for proponent(s) to file the petition with county elections officials.

Friday, January 23, 2026 – Last day for county elections officials to complete raw count totals and certify raw numbers to the Secretary of State.

Thursday, January 29, 2026 – Last day for Secretary of State to determine whether the initiative petition meets the minimum signature requirement and, if the minimum signature requirement has been met, to notify counties to verify a random sampling of signatures.

Tuesday, March 17, 2026 – Last day for county elections officials to verify and certify results of the random sampling of signatures to the Secretary of State.

Monday, March 23, 2026 – Last day for Secretary of State to determine whether the measure qualifies for the ballot or a full check is necessary.

Thursday, June 18, 2026 – If 100% signature verification is necessary, last day for county elections officials to certify to the Secretary of State the results of the 100% signature verification.

Thursday, June 25, 2026 (E-131) – Last day for Secretary of State to determine that the measure is eligible and qualified for the ballot.

Tuesday, November 3, 2026 – General Election Day

APPENDIX B

Further Contact Information

SECRETARY OF STATE

Dr. Shirley N. Weber, Secretary of State
1500 11th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Elections Division: (916) 657-2166
www.sos.ca.gov/elections
Political Reform Division: (916) 653-6224
www.sos.ca.gov/campaign-lobbying/

**FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES
COMMISSION**

Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC)
1102 Q Street, Suite 3050
Sacramento, CA 95811
(916) 322-5660
www.fppc.ca.gov

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL

Cara L. Jenkins, Legislative Counsel
1021 O Street, Room 3210
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 341-8000
www.legislativecounsel.ca.gov

LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

Gabriel Petek, Legislative Analyst
925 L Street, Suite 1000
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 445-4656
www.lao.ca.gov

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Rob Bonta, Attorney General
ATTN: Initiative Coordinator
P.O. Box 944255
Sacramento, CA 94244-2550
(916) 210-6062
www.oag.ca.gov

APPENDIX C

Sample Petitions

REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY

[A one-inch blank space must be left at the top of each page of the petition. §100, 9013]

Initiative Petition (Excluding Official Top Funders)

INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY TO THE VOTERS. [§ 9008(d)]

The Attorney General of California has prepared the following circulating title and summary of the chief purposes and points of the proposed measure:

[Here set forth the unique numeric identifier followed by the circulating title and summary prepared by the Attorney General. This unique numeric identifier and circulating title and summary must also be printed across the top of each page of the petition whereon signatures are to appear, in roman type not smaller than 11-point. (§ 9008)]

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:

THIS PETITION MAY BE CIRCULATED BY A PAID SIGNATURE GATHERER OR A VOLUNTEER. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK. [11-point non-boldface type (§ 101)]

THE PROPONENTS OF THIS PROPOSED INITIATIVE MEASURE HAVE THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW THIS PETITION AT ANY TIME BEFORE THE MEASURE QUALIFIES FOR THE BALLOT. [11-point non-boldface type (§ 101)]

This column for official use only.

1.	Print Your Name: _____ DO NOT SIGN UNLESS you have seen Official Top Funders sheet and its month is still valid. Sign As Registered To Vote: _____	Residence Address ONLY: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____	
2.	Print Your Name: _____ DO NOT SIGN UNLESS you have seen Official Top Funders sheet and its month is still valid. Sign As Registered To Vote: _____	Residence Address ONLY: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____	
3.	Print Your Name: _____ DO NOT SIGN UNLESS you have seen Official Top Funders sheet and its month is still valid. Sign As Registered To Vote: _____	Residence Address ONLY: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____	
4.	Print Your Name: _____ DO NOT SIGN UNLESS you have seen Official Top Funders sheet and its month is still valid. Sign As Registered To Vote: _____	Residence Address ONLY: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____	
5.	Print Your Name: _____ DO NOT SIGN UNLESS you have seen Official Top Funders sheet and its month is still valid. Sign As Registered To Vote: _____	Residence Address ONLY: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____	

DECLARATION OF CIRCULATOR
(to be completed after above signatures have been obtained)

I, _____, am 18 years of age or older. My residence address is _____
(address, city, state, zip). I circulated this section of the petition and witnessed each of the appended signatures being written. Each signature on this petition is, to the best of my information and belief, the genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be. All signatures on this document were obtained between the dates of _____ and _____.
(month/day/year) (month/day/year)

I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct and that I showed each signer a valid and unfalsified "Official Top Funders" sheet.

Executed on _____, _____, at _____.
(month/day) (year) (place of signing)

(complete signature indicating full name of circulator)

[Dates of circulation, printed name, and residence address must be in circulator’s own hand.]

REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY

INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY TO THE VOTERS. [§ 9008(d)]
The Attorney General of California has prepared the following circulating title and summary of the chief purposes and points of the proposed measure:

OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS. Valid only for [Month, Year'] [at least 10-point boldface type (§ 107(b)(2))]
 Petition circulation paid for by [name of the committee as it appears on the most recent Statement of Organization
 filed pursuant to Government Code section 84101]
Committee major funding from:
[Largest contributor]
[Second largest contributor]
[Third largest contributor]

[OPTIONAL] Endorsed by:
 [First endorser]
 [Second endorser]
 [Third endorser]

 Latest info: [link to Secretary of State Top Funders website or committee website]

SIGN ONLY IF IT IS THE SAME MONTH SHOWN IN THE OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS OR YOU SAW AN “OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS” SHEET FOR THIS MONTH. [11-point boldface type. EC § 101(a)]

THE PROPONENTS OF THIS PROPOSED INITIATIVE MEASURE HAVE THE RIGHT TO
WITHDRAW THIS PETITION AT ANY TIME BEFORE THE MEASURE QUALIFIES FOR
THE BALLOT. *[11-point non-boldface type (EC § 101(b))*

This column for official use only.		
1.	Print Your Name: _____ Sign As Registered To Vote: _____	Residence Address ONLY: _____ City:_____ Zip: _____
2.	Print Your Name: _____ Sign As Registered To Vote: _____	Residence Address ONLY: _____ City:_____ Zip: _____
3.	Print Your Name: _____ Sign As Registered To Vote: _____	Residence Address ONLY: _____ City:_____ Zip: _____

(to be completed after above signatures have been obtained)

this section of the petition and witnessed each of the appended signatures being written. Each signature on this petition is, to the best of my information and belief, the genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be. All signatures on this document were obtained between the dates of _____ and _____.
(month, day, year) (month, day, year)

Executed on _____, _____, at _____.

(month and day) (year) (place of signing)

[Dates of circulation, printed name, and residence address must be in circulator's own hand.]

¹ The month and year must start at most seven days after the date the top contributors as defined in Government Code § 84501(c) were last confirmed.

[A one-inch blank space must be left at the top of each page of the petition. §100, 9013]

INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY TO THE VOTERS.

[This heading must be printed in 11-point or larger roman boldface type. (§9008)]

The Attorney General of California has prepared the following circulating title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:

[INSERT ATTORNEY GENERAL'S UNIQUE NUMERIC IDENTIFIER FOLLOWED BY THE CIRCULATING TITLE AND SUMMARY PREPARED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.]

[Roman non-boldface type not smaller than 11-point. (§ 9008)]

To the Honorable Secretary of State of California

We, the undersigned, registered, qualified voters of California, residents of _____ County (or City and County), hereby propose amendments to [(the Constitution of California) (the _____ Code, relating to __)] and petition the Secretary of State to submit the same to the voters of California for their adoption or rejection at the next succeeding general election or at any special statewide election held prior to that general election or as otherwise provided by law. The proposed [(constitutional) (statutory)] amendments read as follows:

[NOTE: Within each set of brackets in the text above, the proponent must select the information within one set of parentheses for printing on the petition. (§ 9009)]

[Insert full title and text of measure. The text of the proposed measure shall be printed in type not smaller than 8 point. (§ 9012)]

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS DISCLOSURE SHEET

OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS. Valid only for [Month, Year]¹

[at least 16-point boldface type § 107(a)(2)]

**[TITLE OF INITIATIVE OR REFERENDUM AS IT APPEARS ON THE
PETITION]** *[14-point font § 107(a)(1)]*

Petition circulation paid for by *[14-point font § 107(a)(1)]*

[Name of the committee as it appears on the most recent Statement of Organization filed pursuant to
Gov. Code §84101]

Committee major funding from:

[Largest contributor]

[Second largest contributor]

[Third largest contributor]

[OPTIONAL] Endorsed by:

[First endorser]

[Second endorser]

[Third endorser]

Latest Official Top Funders: [link to Secretary of State Top Funders website or committee website]

[FOR A STATE INITIATIVE PETITION ONLY]

OFFICIAL TITLE AND SUMMARY

(SAME AS ON PETITION)

[14-point font § 107(a)(1)]

**The Attorney General of California has prepared the following circulating title and summary
of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:**

[11-point font § 107(a)(6)]

[Attorney General summary of the initiative as it appears on the initiative petition in 11-point type.]

¹ The month and year must start at most seven days after the date the top contributors as defined in Government Code § 84501(c) were last confirmed.

APPENDIX E

25% Signature Threshold Certification

Sample of 25% Signature Threshold Certification

Date

Dr. Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.
Secretary of State
1500 11th Street, Fifth Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Weber:

In accordance with California Elections Code section 9034, I/we, [name of proponent(s)], proponent(s) of Secretary of State Initiative Number [#####], entitled [circulating title and - summary], hereby certify that at least 25 percent of the [number of required signatures] required number of signatures to qualify the initiative measure for the ballot has been obtained.

I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing paragraph is true and correct.

Signature of Proponent(s)

Date

Place of Execution