

APPENDIX A

Suggested Deadlines to Qualify Initiatives for the 2020 November General Election

Appendix A: Suggested Deadlines to Qualify Initiatives

The calendar of suggested deadlines included below serve 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 to 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 and referendum measures can only qualify to appear on general election ballots. (Cal. Const., art. II, § 8(c); Elections 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 less than 500 petition signatures they are required to verify all the signatures filed in their office. (Elections 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 made eligible to appear on the next statewide general election ballot, and random sampling 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 30 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 amount of valid signatures, the initiative will become eligible for the next statewide general election. (Elections Code § 9031.)

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

November 3, 2020, General Election Qualifying Using the Random Sample Method

Tuesday, August 20, 2019 – Suggested last day for proponent(s) to submit proposed measure to the Attorney General and request a circulating title and summary.

Thursday, October 24, 2019 – 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.

Tuesday, April 21, 2020 – Last day for proponent(s) to file the petition with county elections officials.

Friday, May 1, 2020 – Last day for county elections officials to complete raw count totals and certify raw numbers to the Secretary of State.

Thursday, May 7, 2020* – Last day for Secretary of State to determine whether the initiative petition meets the minimum signature requirement, generate the random sample, and notify each county elections official of the results.

Friday, June 19, 2020 – 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, 2020* (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 qualify for the November 3, 2020, General Election ballot.

Tuesday, November 3, 2020 – General Election Day

*Please note that the deadlines for the Secretary of State have been decreased to four business days.

November 3, 2020, General Election Qualifying Using the Full Check Method

Tuesday, July 2, 2019 – Suggested last day for proponent(s) to submit proposed measure to the Attorney General and request a circulating title and summary.

Thursday, September 5, 2019 – Last day for Attorney General to prepare and issue the circulating title and summary (includes time allotted for fiscal estimate); and proponent(s) may begin circulation of the petition.

Tuesday, March 3, 2020 – Last day for proponent(s) to file the petition with county elections officials.

Friday, March 13, 2020 – Last day for county elections officials to complete raw count totals and certify raw numbers to the Secretary of State.

Thursday, March 19, 2020* – Last day for Secretary of State to determine whether the initiative petitions meet the minimum signature requirement, generate the random sample, and notify each county elections official of the results.

Friday, May 1, 2020 – Last day for county elections officials to verify and certify results of the random sampling of signatures to the Secretary of State.

Thursday, May 7, 2020* – Last day for Secretary of State to determine whether the measure qualifies for the ballot or a full check is necessary.

Friday, June 19, 2020 – 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, 2020* (E-131) – Last day for Secretary of State to determine that the measure qualifies for the ballot.

Tuesday, November 3, 2020 – General Election Day

*Please note that the deadlines for the Secretary of State have been decreased to four business days.

