

# INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM, AND POLITICAL PARTY QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

## INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM PETITION SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS

### SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS FOR QUALIFYING INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM PETITIONS IN 2007, 2008, 2009, AND 2010

(Based on the number of persons who voted for the office of Governor at the 2006 General Election)

#### INITIATIVE

Often called "direct democracy," the initiative is the power of the people to propose statutes, amendments to the state constitution or general obligation bond measures for voter approval or rejection. An initiative statute requires the signatures of registered voters equal in number to 5% of the votes cast for all candidates for governor in the last general election in order to qualify for the ballot; an initiative constitutional amendment requires signatures equaling 8% of the gubernatorial vote. A qualified initiative is placed on the ballot at a regularly scheduled statewide election that occurs at least 131 days after the measure qualifies, or at a special election called by the Governor. Any initiative that qualifies after the 131-day deadline is placed on the next ensuing statewide ballot. The Legislature may amend or repeal initiative statutes, but must submit the amendment/repeal to a vote of the people, unless the initiative statute permits amendment or repeal without voter approval.

Number of Signatures Required for an Initiative Constitutional Amendment: **694,354**  
[8 percent of 8,679,416 (Art. II, § 8(b), Constitution)]

Number of Signatures Required for an Initiative Statutory Measure: **433,971**  
[5 percent of 8,679,416 (Art. II, § 8(b), Constitution)]

#### REFERENDUM

Referendum is the power of the people to approve or reject statutes adopted by the Legislature, except those that are urgency, that call for elections, or that provide for tax levies or appropriations for usual current expenses of the state. Citizens wishing to block implementation of a legislatively adopted statute must gather, within 90 days of enactment of the bill, signatures equal in number to at least 5% of the votes cast for all candidates for governor in the last gubernatorial election. A qualified referendum is placed on the ballot at a statewide election that occurs at least 31 days after the measure qualifies, or at a special election called by the Governor. The Legislature may amend or repeal referendum statutes.

Number of Signatures Required for a Referendum Measure: **433,971**  
[5 percent of 8,679,416 (Art. II, § 9(b), Constitution)]

**NEW POLITICAL PARTY QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE 2008 AND 2010 PRIMARY ELECTIONS**

(Based on the number of persons who voted at the 2006 General Election)

There are two methods by which political parties can qualify for official status enabling them to place candidates on the primary election ballot. The qualification deadline for either method is 135 days before a statewide primary in an even-numbered year, based on the registration totals as of the 154<sup>th</sup> day before the election.

1. **Registration.** By the 135-day deadline, a party must have obtained registrations equal in number to 1% of the total vote cast in the last gubernatorial election. The current registration requirement is:

New Political Party by Registration      88,991  
[1 percent of 8,899,059 (§5100(b), Elections Code)]

2. **Petition.** By the deadline, a party must have collected petition signatures of registered voters of any party equal in number to 10% of the vote cast in the last gubernatorial election. The current signature requirement is:

New Political Party by Petition      889,906  
[10 percent of 8,899,059 (§5100(c), Elections Code)]

**REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN QUALIFIED STATUS**

To retain its official status, a party must maintain a registration level equal to 1/15 of 1% (0.00067) of the total registration of the state at all times [Elections Code §5101]. In addition, after each gubernatorial election, party qualifications are reviewed. To retain its official status after the election, a party must:

1. Maintain a registration level equal to at least 1 percent of the entire vote of the state at the last gubernatorial election [Elections Code §5100(b)]

**or**

2. Have a candidate for statewide office (Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Controller, Treasurer, Attorney General, Insurance Commissioner, or United States Senator) poll at least 2% of the vote for that office [Elections Code §5100(a)].