

TABLE 6.11
State Initiatives: Circulating the Petition

State or other jurisdiction	Basis for signatures (see key below)		Maximum time period allowed for petition circulation (a)	Can signatures be removed from petition (b)	Completed petition filed with	Days prior to election	
	Const. amdt.	Statute				Const. amdt.	Statute
Alabama	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Alaska	...	10% TV from 3/4 SLD (c)	1 yr.	Y	LG	...	...
Arizona	15% VG	10% VG	2 yr.	Y	SS	4 mos.	4 mos.
Arkansas	10% VG (d)	8% VG (d)	...	N	SS	120 days	...
California	8% VG	5% VG	150 days	Y	(e)	131 days	131 days
Colorado	5% VSS	5% VSS	6 mos. (3 mos prior to election)	Y	SS	90 days	90 days
Connecticut	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Delaware	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Florida	8% VEP, 8% from 1/2 CD	...	2 yr.	N	SS	Feb. 1 (f)	...
Georgia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hawaii	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Idaho	...	6% EV (cc)	(g)	Y	SS	...	4 mos.
Illinois	8% VG	...	18 mos. prior to election	Y	SBE	6 mos.	...
Indiana	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Iowa	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kansas	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kentucky	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Louisiana	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Maine	...	10% VG	1 yr.	...	SS	...	(h)
Maryland	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Massachusetts	3% VG, no more than 25% from 1 county	3% VG, no more than 25% from 1 county (i) 8% VG	From 3rd Wed. in Sept. to 1st Wed. in Dec. (k)	Y (j)	SS (k)	(i)	(l)
Michigan	10% VG no more than 15% from each CD	8%VG, no more than 15% from each CD	180 days	N (m)	SS	120 days	160 days
Minnesota	...	...	...	...	(e)	...	...
Mississippi	12% VG (n)	...	1 yr.	Y	SS (e)	90 days prior to LS	...
Missouri	8% VG, 8% each from 2/3 CD	5% VG, 5% each from 2/3 CD	Approx. 18 mos.	Y	SS	6 mos.	6 mos.
Montana	10% VG and 10% in 40 of the SLD	5% VG and 5% in 34 of the SLD	(o)	Y	SS	(o)	(o)
Nebraska	10% EV	7% EV	...	Y	SS	4 mos.	4 mos.
Nevada	10% TV (p)	10% TV (p)	(q)	Y	SS	90 days	30 days prior to LS
New Hampshire	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
New Jersey	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
New Mexico	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
New York	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
North Carolina	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
North Dakota	4% resident population (r)	2% resident population (r)	1 yr.	N	SS	120 days	120 days
Ohio	10% VG, 5% each from 1/2 counties	3% VG, 1.5% each from 1/2 counties	...	Y	SS	90 days	(s)
Oklahoma	15% VG (t)	8% VG (t)	90 days	Y	SS	60 days	60 days
Oregon	8% VG	6% VG	...	Y (u)	SS	4 mos.	4 mos.
Pennsylvania	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Rhode Island	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
South Carolina	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
South Dakota	10% VG	5% VG	(v)	N	SS	...	...
Tennessee	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Texas	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Utah	...	10% VEP, 10% each from 26 of 29 senate districts (w)	316 days	Y	LG	...	June 1
Vermont	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Virginia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Washington	...	8% VG	6 to 9 mos. (x)	N	SS	...	(y)
West Virginia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Wisconsin	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Wyoming	...	15% TV, from 2/3 counties	18 mos.	Y	SS	...	120 days
American Samoa	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
CNMI*	50% (z)	20%	(aa)	Y	...	...	...
Puerto Rico	...	(bb)	...	...	...	...	...
U.S. Virgin Islands	...	10% ED	180 days	Y	SS	...	6 mos.

See footnotes at end of table

INITIATIVES

TABLE 6.11

State Initiatives: Circulating the Petition (continued)

Sources: The Council of State Governments' survey of state election website, Initiative & Referendum Institute website and Ballotpedia website, May 2019.

*Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Key:

...—No provision.

VG—Total votes cast for the position of governor in the last election.

EV—Eligible voters.

VH—Total votes cast for the office receiving the highest number of votes in last general election.

TV—Total voters in last election.

VSS—Total votes cast for all candidates for the office of secretary of state at the previous general election.

VEP—Total votes cast in the state as a whole on the last presidential election.

ED—Election district.

CD—Congressional district.

SBE—State Board of Elections.

SLD—State legislative district for house.

LG—Lieutenant Governor.

SS—Secretary of State.

LS—Legislative session.

Y—Yes.

N—No.

T—Tuesday.

- (a) The petition circulation period begins when petition forms have been approved and provided to sponsors. Sponsors are those individuals granted permission to circulate a petition, and are therefore responsible for the validity of each signature on a given petition.
- (b) Should an individual wish to remove his/her name from a petition, a request to do so must be submitted in writing to the state officer with whom the petition is filed.
- (c) Signed by qualified voters who are equal in number to at least ten per cent of those who voted in the preceding general election, who are resident in at least three-fourths of the house districts of the State, and who, in each of those house districts, are equal in number to at least seven percent of those who voted in the preceding general election in the house district.
- (d) Distributed across at least 15 counties.
- (e) County elections officials.
- (f) February 1 of the general election year.
- (g) Eighteen months from receipt of ballot title or April 30 of year of election on initiative, whichever occurs first.
- (h) To be placed on November ballot, petitions must be submitted to SS by 5:00 p.m. on 50th day after convening of Legislature in 1st regular session, or by 5:00 p.m. on 25th day in 2nd regular session.
- (i) First Wednesday in December.
- (j) Should an individual wish to remove his/her name from a petition, a request to do so must be submitted in writing to the local election official before the petition is submitted for certification of signatures.
- (k) Petitions first must be submitted to local municipal clerks for signature certification.
- (l) After legislative inaction, petitions must be filed no later than the 1st Wednesday in July, signed by not less than 1/2 of 1 percent of the last vote cast for governor.

(m) Not after petition has been filed.

(n) The signatures must be distributed among the state's Congressional districts. If less than the minimum in any one district, the entire petition will be ruled invalid.

(o) There is 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 is 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.

(p) In each "petition district" (per SB 212, effective 2009) which are set the same as Congressional districts.

(q) Each have different deadlines and circulation periods.

Amendments: Initial filing cannot be made before Sept. 1 of the year preceding the election year and the petition must be filed with the county officials by the third Tuesday in June of an even-numbered year. Statutes: Initial filing cannot be made before Jan. 1 of the year preceding the next regular legislative session and the petition must be filed with county officials by the second Tuesday in November of an even-numbered year.

(r) Percentage of resident population of the state at the last federal decennial census.

(s) Ten days prior to commencement of General Assembly session for initial filing; second petition must be filed within 90 days after General Assembly takes no action, fails to enact or passes amended form; the petition is filed with the secretary of state.

(t) In 2012, voters approved a constitutional amendment placed on the ballot by the legislature that changed the signature requirement from percentage of votes cast for the office receiving the highest number of votes in last general election to percentage of votes cast for position of governor in the last election.

(u) Only by the chief petitioners before submitting signatures for verification. Signatures may not be removed once the signatures have been submitted to the Secretary of State.

(v) No more than 24 months preceding the election date specified on the petition, however petition is submitted 12 months before the election.

(w) Five percent in both categories for indirect.

(x) Six months for direct initiative and nine months for indirect initiative. Signatures for direct initiatives are due at least four month prior to the general election. Signatures for indirect initiatives are due at least 10 days prior to the beginning of the session.

(y) Initiatives to the legislature must be turned in 10 days before the legislature convenes. If the legislature does not act, the initiative goes to the next General Election ballot.

(z) At least 25 percent in each senate district.

(aa) Until 120 days before the date of the election.

(bb) Ten percent district and 41 percent territorial.

(cc) Geographic distribution shall be as follows: 6% of the qualified electors at the time of the last general election in each of at least 18 legislative districts; provided however, the total number of signatures shall be equal to or greater than 6% of the qualified electors in the state at the time of the last general election.