

County of Sacramento
Voter Registration and Elections
Guide to Initiatives and Referenda
2025



PREFACE

This guide has been prepared to assist voters in the Initiative and Referendum process. It contains a summary of procedures for preparing and qualifying County, and Special District Initiatives and Referenda.

This guide contains general information and does not have the force and effect of law, regulation or rule. In case of conflict, the law, regulation or rule will apply.

Anyone contemplating either process should seek legal counsel, who is familiar with local government, for wording or any legal questions.

If the Initiative or Referendum concerns a City, that City must be contacted for information.

Information on how to qualify a State initiative can be found on the Secretary of State's website at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-measures/how-qualify-initiative>.

Registrar of Voters
County of Sacramento

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GENERAL INFORMATION

INITIATIVES

An Initiative is the power of the electors to propose a new ordinance, an authoritative rule, or law, by which they will be governed. An Initiative is placed on the ballot after its proponents have successfully met a series of deadlines.

Any proposed ordinance may be submitted to the board of supervisors by filing an initiative petition with the county elections official signed by not less than the number of voters specified. Elections Code § 9101

REFERENDA

A referendum is the submission of an ordinance, proposed or already in effect, to a direct vote of the people. By using referendum powers, the legislative board of a jurisdiction (e.g., Board of Supervisors) may ask registered voters to decide on the enactment, repeal, or amendment of any ordinance.

Additionally, voters may independently circulate a petition protesting the adoption of an ordinance and request that the issue be put up for a popular vote.

Both types of measures qualify for the ballot through submission of a petition signed by a designated percentage of the electorate. And, to help avoid any confusion, referendum is singular. Referenda is used for plural as well as referendums.

COUNTYWIDE INITIATIVES

Note: County Water District ordinances may be passed by voters in accordance with Article 1 (commencing with Section 9100) of Chapter 2 of Division 9 of the Elections Code. Water Code §§ 30830, 30831

ORDINANCES-NOTICE OF INTENTION

File Notice of Intention

Before circulating any initiative petition in a county, its proponents shall file with the county elections official a notice of intention to do so.

The notice shall include the names and business or residence addresses of at least one but not more than five proponents of the petition and shall be accompanied by the written text of the initiative, not exceeding 500 words in length, stating the reasons for the proposed petition, and a request that a ballot title and summary be prepared. The notice shall be in substantially the following form: Elections Code §§ 9103(a), 9104

Notice of Intent to Circulate Petition:

Notice is hereby given by the persons whose names appear hereon of their intention to circulate the petition within the County of *(insert the name of the county)*. for the purpose of *(insert purpose of the petition)*. A statement of reasons of the proposed action as contemplated in the petition is as follows: *(insert optional 500-word statement of reasons, if submitted with the notice.)*

(Note: the above notice must be included in each section of the petition)

Deposit of Fee

Voter Registration and Elections will verify signatures for another government agency only in connection with an election or petition circulated by registered voters within Sacramento County.

Any person filing a notice of intention with the county elections official shall pay a fee to be established by the Board of Supervisors not to exceed two hundred dollars (\$200.00) to be refunded to the filer if, within one year of the date of filing the notice of intention, the county elections official certifies the sufficiency of the petition. Elections Code § 9103(b)

Please refer to the Fee Schedule on our website for questions regarding signature verification fees.

Ballot Title and Summary- Prepared by County Counsel

Immediately upon the request from the proponent to prepare a Ballot Title and Summary, the county elections official will transmit a copy of the proposed measure to County Counsel. Within 15 days after the proposed measure is filed, the county counsel shall provide and return to the county elections official a ballot title and summary for the proposed measure. Elections Code § 9105

The ballot title may differ from any other title of the proposed measure and shall express in 500 words or less the purpose of the proposed measure. In providing the ballot title, the county counsel shall give a true and impartial statement of the purpose of the proposed measure in such language that the ballot title shall neither be an argument, nor be likely to create prejudice, for or against the proposed measure. Elections Code § 9105

Writ of Mandate (Appeal)

Any elector of the county may seek a writ of mandate requiring the ballot title or summary prepared by the county counsel to be amended. The court shall expedite hearing on the writ. A peremptory writ of mandate shall be issued only upon clear and convincing proof that the ballot title or summary is false, misleading, or inconsistent. Elections Code § 9106

File Proof of Publication

The proponents shall, prior to the circulation of the petition, publish the Notice of Intention, ballot title and summary of the proposed measure in a newspaper of general circulation published in that county, then file proof of publication with the county elections official. Elections Code § 9105(b)

PETITION

Petition Preparation

Initiative proponents are responsible for the preparation and printing of the petition. The ballot title and summary prepared by the county counsel shall appear upon each section of the petition, above the text of the proposed measure and across the top of each page of the petition on which signatures are to appear in roman boldface type not smaller than 11-point. The ballot title and summary shall be clearly separated from the text of the measure. The text of the measure shall be printed in type not smaller than 8-point. Elections Code § 9105

INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE DIRECTLY SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS

The county counsel has prepared the following title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:

(Insert Ballot Title and Summary)

(Here set forth the title and summary prepared by the county counsel. This title and summary must also be printed across the top of each page of the petition whereon signatures are to appear.) Elections Code § 9105(c)

Each section of the petition shall bear a copy of the notice of intention, and the title and summary prepared by the county counsel. Elections Code § 9108

Petition Notice to the Public

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any state or local initiative petition required to be signed by voters shall contain in 11-point type, before that portion of the petition for voters' signatures, printed names, and residence addresses, the following language, in order:

“NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC” - (This text shall be in a boldface type)
Elections Code § 101

“THIS PETITION MAY BE CIRCULATED BY A PAID SIGNATURE GATHERER OR A
VOLUNTEER. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK.”
(This text shall be in a non-boldface type.) Elections Code § 101(3)

Official Top Funders Disclosure Requirements:

For any local initiative, referendum, or recall petition for which the circulation is paid for by a committee formed pursuant to Government Code § 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. (Elections Code § 107 (b))

Elections officials are not required to verify the accuracy of the information or to reapprove the petition upon any updates the committee makes. (Elections Code § 107(g))

If using a separate Official Top Funders Sheet at the top of the sheet shall appear 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 subdivision (c) of Section 84501 of the Government Code were last confirmed. This text shall be boldface type and with a type size of at least 16-point. Separated by a blank horizontal line from the text in paragraph (2) shall appear the TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE, referendum, or recall as it appears on the petition, in ALL CAPITAL LETTERS.

“OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS. Valid only for [Month, Year]”
(followed by the month and year this text shall be in boldface font and at least 16-point).
Elections Code § 107
“TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE AS IT APPEARS ON THE PETITION” Elections
Code § 107 (a) (1)

Next, separated by a blank horizontal line from the text in paragraph (3), shall appear a disclosure statement in a printed or drawn box with a black border.

At the top of the disclosure statement shall appear the text “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 Section 84101 of the Government Code. If the committee has any top contributors as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 84501 of the Government Code, it shall be followed by a blank horizontal line and then the underlined text “Committee major funding from:”.

The top contributors as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 84501 of the Government Code, 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 subdivision (b) of Section 84501 of the Government Code, on the first line.

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 pursuant to this subparagraph shall be separated from the text above and below it by a blank horizontal line.

If using a separate Official Top Funders Sheet. The following line shall include the text “Latest Official Top Funders:” followed by either (i) the internet web page on the Secretary of State’s internet website that lists the “Official Top Funders” statements that are reported pursuant to subdivision (f), or (ii) the internet website described in subdivision (c).

Form of the Petition

A blank space at least one inch wide to the right of each name must be included for the use of the elections official in verifying the petition. The part of a petition for the voters’ signatures, printed names, and residence addresses and for the blank spaces for verification purposes shall be numbered consecutively commencing with the number one and continuing through the number of signature spaces allotted to each section. The number of signatures attached to each section shall be at the discretion of the person soliciting the signatures.

Elections Code § 100 The petition format shall be substantially in the following form:

Official Use Only

1.	(Print Name)	(Residence Address ONLY)	
	(Signature)	(City)	
2.	(Print Name)	(Residence Address ONLY)	
	(Signature)	(City)	

Circulation of Petition

A person who is 18 years of age or older may circulate an initiative or referendum petition anywhere within the state. Elections Code §§ 102, 104

The proponents may commence to circulate the petitions among the voters of the county for signatures by any registered voter of the county after publication of the title and summary prepared by the county counsel. Elections Code § 9108

Declaration of Circulator

Wherever any petition or paper is submitted to the elections official, each section of the petition or paper shall have attached to it a declaration signed by the circulator of the petition or paper, setting forth, in the circulator’s own hand, the following:

1. The printed name of the circulator.
2. 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.
3. The dates between which all the signatures to the petition or paper were obtained.

Each declaration submitted pursuant to this section shall also set forth the following:

1. That the circulator circulated that section and witnessed the appended signatures being written.
2. 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.
3. That the circulator is 18 years of age or older.
4. If the petition does not include the disclosure statement described by subdivision (b) of Section 107, that the circulator showed each signer a valid and unfalsified "Official Top Funders" sheet, as required by Section 107.

The circulator shall certify the content of the declaration as to its truth and correctness, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California, with the signature of the circulator's name. The circulator shall state the date and the place of execution on the declaration immediately preceding the circulator's signature. Elections Code § 104

When to Circulate the Petition

The proponents may commence to circulate the petition among the voters of the county for signatures by any registered voter of the county after publication of the title and summary prepared by the county counsel. Each section of the petition shall bear a copy of the notice of intention, and the title and summary prepared by the county counsel. Elections Code § 9108

During the circulation of the petition or before taking any action to either submit the initiative to the voters or enact the ordinance, the Board of Supervisors may refer the initiative to any county agency or agencies for review and a report on its effect and fiscal impact. The report shall be presented to the Board of Supervisors no later than 30 days after certification of the petition's sufficiency by the county elections official to the Board of Supervisors. Elections Code § 9111

Who May Sign the Petition?

Each section of the petition shall bear the name of the county. Only persons who are eligible registered voters of the county at the time of signing the petition are entitled to sign it. The person that circulated the petition may sign the petition. The signature of the circulator shall be given the same effect as that of any other qualified signer. Elections Code §§ 100, 106, 9020, 9021

A voter who is unable to personally affix on a petition the information required may request another person to print the voter's name and place of residence on the appropriate spaces of the petition, but the voter shall personally affix his or her mark or signature on the appropriate space of the petition, which shall be witnessed by one person by subscribing their name thereon. Elections Code § 100.5

Petition Signatures

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, whenever any initiative or referendum is required to be signed by voters of any county, school district, or special district subject to petitioning, only a person who is an eligible registered voter at the time of signing the petition is entitled to sign

it. Each signer shall at the time of signing the petition personally affix his or her signature, printed name, residence address, giving street and number, or if no street or number exists, then a designation of the residence address which will enable the location to be readily ascertained and the name of the unincorporated community. Elections Code § 9020

Signatures Required

Countywide Initiatives: Ten percent (10%) of vote within the County for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election preceding publication of notice of intention. Elections Code § 9118

County Charter Amendment: Ten percent (10%) of vote within the County for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election. Government Code § 23720(a)

When to File the Petition

Signatures shall be secured, and the petition shall be presented to the county elections official for filing within 180 days from the date of receipt of the title and summary, or after termination of any action for a writ of mandate, pursuant to Elections Code § 9106 and, if applicable, after receipt of an amended title or summary, or both, whichever occurs later. Elections Code § 9110

Filing the Petition

The petition shall be filed by the proponents, or by any person or persons authorized in writing by the proponents. All sections of the petition shall be filed at one time. Any sections of the petition not so filed shall be void for all purposes. Once filed, no petition section shall be amended except by order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

When the petition is filed, the county elections official shall determine the total number of signatures affixed to the petition. If, from this examination, the county elections official determines that the number of signatures, prima facie, equals or is in excess of the minimum number of signatures required, the county elections official shall examine the petition in accordance with Elections Code §§ 9114 or 9115. If, from this examination, the county elections official determines that the number of signatures, prima facie, does not equal or exceed the minimum number of signatures required, no further action shall be taken.

Elections Code § 9113

Examination of Signatures

Within 30 days from the date of filing of the petition, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, if, from the examination of petitions, it shows that more than 500 signatures have been signed on the petition, the elections official may use a random sampling technique for verification of signatures. The random sample of signatures to be verified shall be drawn so that every signature filed with the elections official shall be given an equal opportunity to be included in the sample. The random sampling shall include an examination of at least 500, or 3 percent of the signatures, whichever is greater. A signature shall not be invalidated because of a variation of the signature caused by the substitution of initials for the first or middle name, or both, of the person signing the petition.

If the statistical sampling shows that the number of valid signatures is within 95 to 110

percent of the number of signatures of qualified voters needed to declare the petition sufficient, the elections official shall, within 90 days from the date of the filing of the petition, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, examine and verify the signatures filed. If the elections official determines, prior to completing the examination of each signature filed, that the petition is signed by the requisite number of qualified voters to declare the petition sufficient, the elections official may terminate the verification of the remaining unverified signatures.

In determining the number of valid signatures, the elections official may check the signatures against facsimiles of voters' signatures provided that the method of preparing and displaying the facsimiles complies with law. A signature shall not be invalidated because of a variation of the signature caused by the substitution of initials for the first or middle name, or both, of the person signing the petition.

The elections official shall notify the proponents of the petition as to the sufficiency or insufficiency of the petition.

If the petition is found insufficient, no further action shall be taken. However, the failure to secure sufficient signatures, shall not preclude the filing of a new petition on the same subject, at a later date. Elections Code §§ 9308, 9309

Withdrawing a Signature

A voter who has signed an initiative, referendum, or recall petition pursuant to the Constitution or laws of this state shall have their signature withdrawn from the petition upon filing a written request that includes the name or title of the petition and the voter's name, residence address, and signature with the appropriate county elections official or city elections official *prior to the day the petition is filed*. A written request made under this section shall not constitute a petition or paper for purposes of Section 104. Elections Code § 103

Disposition of Sufficient Petition

If the initiative petition is signed by voters not less in number than Ten percent (10%) of the entire votes cast within the county for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election preceding the publication of the notice of intention to circulate an initiative petition, (Election Code § 9118) the Board of Supervisors shall do one of the following:

1. Adopt the ordinance, without alteration, at the regular meeting at which the certification of the petition is presented, or within 10 days after it is presented.
2. Submit the ordinance, without alteration, to the voters pursuant to Election Code § 1405.
3. Order a report pursuant to Election Code § 9111 at the regular meeting at which the certification of the petition is presented. When the report is presented to the Board of Supervisors, the board shall either adopt the ordinance within 10 days or order an election pursuant to subdivision (b).

During the circulation of the petition or before taking either action described in subdivisions (a) and (b) of Section 9118, the board of supervisors may refer the proposed initiative measure to a county agency or agencies for a report on its effect and fiscal impact. The report shall be

presented to the board of supervisors within the time prescribed by the board of supervisors, but no later than 30 days after the county elections official certifies to the board of supervisors the sufficiency of the petition. Election Code § 9111

Withdrawing an Initiative

The proponent of an initiative may withdraw the initiative at any time before the 88th day before the election, whether the petition has already been found sufficient by the elections official. Elections Code § 9118.5

Requirements for Ordinance to Become Effective

If a majority of the voters voting on a proposed ordinance vote in its favor, the ordinance shall become a valid and binding ordinance of the county. The ordinance shall be considered as adopted upon the date the vote is declared by the Board of Supervisors and shall go into effect 10 days after that date. Elections Code § 9122

Conflicting Ordinances

If the provisions of two or more ordinances adopted at the same election conflict, the ordinance receiving the highest number of affirmative votes shall control. Elections Code § 9123

Repeal or Amendment of Ordinance

No ordinance proposed by initiative petition and adopted either by the Board of Supervisors without submission to the voters or adopted by the voters shall be repealed or amended except by a vote of the people unless provision is otherwise made in the original ordinance. In all other respects, an ordinance proposed by initiative petition and adopted shall have the same force and effect as any ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors. Elections Code § 9125

Retention of the Petition and Copies Furnished

Except as provided in subdivision (b), elections officials required by law to receive or file in their offices any initiative or referendum petition shall preserve the petition until eight months after the certification of the results of the election for which the petition qualified or, if the measure, for any reason, is not submitted to the voters, eight months after the final examination of the petition by the elections official. Elections Code § 17200

From the time materials pertaining to an initiative petition are filed pursuant to Section 9103 until the day after the county elections official determines that the initiative petition does not contain the minimum number of signatures required, the day after the election at which the initiative measure is put before the voters, or the day after the proposed ordinance is adopted by the board of supervisors after being submitted to the board of supervisors pursuant to Section 9101, as applicable, the county elections official shall do both of the following: Elections Code § 9103.5.

1. Keep on file at his or her office the notice of intention, written text of the initiative, and request for a ballot title and summary that the proponents of the initiative measure

filed with the county elections official pursuant to Section 9103.

2. Furnish copies of the materials he or she is required to keep on file pursuant to subdivision (a) to any person upon request. The county elections official may charge a fee to a person obtaining copies pursuant to this subdivision. The fee may not exceed the actual cost incurred by the county elections official in providing the copies.

ENACTING, AMENDING, REVISING OR REPEALING THE COUNTY CHARTER

All provisions of law relative to the initiative may be invoked by the electors of this County, and all ordinances that may be passed by the Board of Supervisors, shall be subject to referendum whenever the use of initiative or referendum is permitted by law. (Sacramento County Charter Article XVII Section 73)

Any proposal to enact, amend, or otherwise revise a county charter by initiative petition may be submitted to the Board of Supervisors and shall be subject to Article 1, commencing with 9100 of the Elections Code. However, nothing in this article shall be construed to allow a Board of Supervisors to enact, amend, or otherwise revise a county charter without submitting the proposal to the voters. Elections Code § 9102

Methods

A county charter may be amended by proposals submitted by the governing body or by a petition signed by Ten percent (10%) of the qualified electors of the county, computed upon the total number of votes cast in the county for all candidates for Governor at the last general election at which a Governor was elected, filed in the office of the county elections official, petitioning the governing body to submit a proposed amendment or amendments to the charter of the county to the qualified electors of the county, which amendment or amendments are set forth in full in the petition.

A county charter may be repealed by proposals submitted by the governing body or by a petition signed by Ten percent (10%) of the qualified electors of the county computed upon the total number of votes cast in the county for all candidates for Governor at the last general election at which a Governor was elected. The petition, petitioning the governing body to submit the question of charter repeal to the qualified electors of the county, shall be filed in the office of the county elections official. Petitions to amend or repeal a county charter shall be subject to Article 1 (commencing with Section 9100) of Chapter 2 of Division 9 of the Elections Code. Government Code § 23720.

Submission to Voters and Alternative Proposals

Upon the presentation of a petition, or upon its own submission of a proposal to amend or repeal the charter, the governing body shall submit the amendment or amendments proposed, or the question of the repeal of the charter to the eligible registered voters of the county at a special election held on the next established election date not less than 88 days after the presentation of the petition, or submission of the proposal. In submitting the question of charter repeal or amendment, any alternative article or proposition may be presented for the choice of the voters and may be voted on separately without prejudice to others. The county elections official shall cause the complete text of the proposed amendment or amendments to be printed. A copy of the proposed amendment or amendments shall be made available to any voter upon request.

The impartial analysis prepared pursuant to 9160 of the Elections Code shall include a statement notifying voters that they may call the county elections official's office and request that a copy of the proposed amendment or amendments to the charter be mailed to them at no cost. Government Code § 23722.

Ratification

If a majority of electors voting, at a general or special election, shall vote in favor of the proposed amendment or amendments or in favor of charter repeal, the amendment or amendments or charter repeal shall be deemed to be ratified but shall not take effect until accepted and filed by the Secretary of State, pursuant to the provisions of Government Code § 23724. Government Code § 23723

NOTE: Please see the “County Initiatives” section of this guide for further information on petition format and other procedural processes.

DISTRICT INITIATIVES

Overview

In addition to any other method provided by law, ordinances may be enacted by any district pursuant to Article 1 commencing with 9300 of the Elections Code. However, the provisions of Article 1 shall not apply to irrigation districts, to a district formed under a law which does not provide a procedure for elections, to a district formed under a law which does not provide for action by ordinance, to a district governed by an election procedure that permits voters, in electing the district's directors or trustees, to cast more than one vote per voter, or to a district in which the directors are empowered to cast more than one vote per director when acting on any matter. Elections Code § 9300

Definitions

"District," for the purposes of initiative and referendum, commencing with Elections Code § 9300, includes any regional agency that has the power to tax, to regulate land use, or to condemn and purchase land. Elections Code § 317

"District elections official," for the purposes of initiative and referendum, under Article 1 (commencing with Elections Code § 9300) of Chapter 4 of Division 9, includes the county elections official or other officer or board charged with performing the duties required of the clerk of the district by that chapter. Elections Code § 308

Publication of Notice of Intention

Before circulating an initiative petition in any district, the proponents of that measure shall publish a notice of intention. The notice shall be accompanied by a printed statement stating the reasons for the proposed petition. The printed statement shall not exceed 500 words. The notice shall be signed by at least one, but not more than five, proponents, and shall be in substantially the following form:

Notice of Intention to Circulate Initiative Petition

Notice is hereby given of the intention of the persons whose names appear hereon of their intention to circulate the petition within the (insert the district name) for the purpose of (insert purpose of the petition). A statement of the reasons for the proposed action as contemplated in the petition is as follows: Elections Code § 9302

A notice of intention and statement as referred to in Elections Code § 9302 shall be published at least once in a newspaper of general circulation within the district. Elections Code § 9303

Filing of Notice of Intention and Statement

Within 10 days after the date of publication or posting, or both, of the notice of intention and statement of the reasons for the proposed petition, the proponents shall file with the district elections official a copy of the notice and statement as published or posted, or both, together with the written text of the initiative and an affidavit made by a representative of the newspaper in which the notice was published or, if the notice was posted, by a voter of the district certifying to the fact of publication or posting. Elections Code § 9304

Official Top Funders Disclosure Requirements

A committee formed pursuant to Section 82013 of the Government Code that pays for the circulation of a state or local initiative, referendum, or recall petition must disclose to potential signers of the petition that fact. Follow the Procedures in the Official Top Funders Disclosure Requirements of the County wide Initiative section of this document. Elections Code § 107.

Petition Notice to the Public

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any state or local initiative petition required to be signed by voters shall contain in 11-point type, before that portion of the petition for voters' signatures, printed names, and residence addresses, the following language in order:

"NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC" This text shall be in a boldface font.

If the petition does not include the disclosure statement described by subdivision (b) of Section 107, the text

"YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SEE AN "OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS" SHEET." This text shall be in a boldface font

"THIS PETITION MAY BE CIRCULATED BY A PAID SIGNATURE GATHERER OR A VOLUNTEER. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK." Elections code § 101

Form of the Petition

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, whenever any initiative or referendum is required to be signed by voters of any county, school district, or special district subject to petitioning, only a person who is an eligible registered voter at the time of signing the petition is entitled to sign it. Each signer shall at the time of signing the petition personally affix his or her signature, printed name, and place of residence, giving street and number, or if no street or number exists, then a designation of the place of residence which will enable the location to be readily ascertained and the name of the unincorporated community. Elections Code § 9020

A blank space at least one inch wide shall be left blank after each name for the use of the elections official in verifying the petition. The part of a petition for the voters' signatures, printed names, and residence addresses and for the blank spaces for verification purposes shall be numbered consecutively commencing with the number one and continuing through the number of signature spaces allotted to each section. The number of signatures attached to each section shall be at the discretion of the person soliciting the signatures. Elections Code § 100. The petition format shall be substantially in the following form:

Official Use Only

1.	(Print Name)	(Residence Address ONLY)	
	(Signature)	(City)	
2.	(Print Name)	(Residence Address ONLY)	
	(Signature)	(City)	

Who May Circulate the Petition?

A person who is 18 years of age or older may circulate an initiative or referendum petition anywhere within the state. Elections Code §§ 102, 104

Declaration of Circulator

Wherever any petition or paper is submitted to the elections official, each section of the petition or paper shall have attached to it a declaration signed by the circulator of the petition or paper, setting forth, in the circulator's own hand, the following:

1. The printed name of the circulator.
2. 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.
3. The dates between which all the signatures to the petition or paper were obtained.

Each declaration submitted pursuant to this section shall also set forth the following:

1. That the circulator circulated that section and witnessed the appended signatures being written.
2. 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.
3. That the circulator is 18 years of age or older.
4. If the petition does not include the disclosure statement described by subdivision (b) of Section 107, that the circulator showed each signer a valid and unfalsified "Official Top Funders" sheet, as required by Section 107.

The circulator shall certify the content of the declaration as to its truth and correctness, under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California, with the signature of the circulator's name. The circulator shall state the date and the place of execution on the declaration immediately preceding the circulator's signature. Elections Code §§ 104, 9307

Circulation and Signers of the Petition

After filing a copy of the notice of intention, statement of the reasons for the proposed petition, written text of the initiative, and affidavit of publication or posting with the district elections official pursuant to Elections Code § 9304, the petition may be circulated among the voters of the district for signatures by any person who meets the requirements of Elections Code § 102. Each section of the petition shall bear a copy of the notice of intention and statement. Elections Code § 9305

Signatures Required

County Initiatives: Ten percent (10%) of vote within the County for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election preceding publication of notice of intention. Elections Code § 9118

County Charter Amendment: Ten percent (10%) of vote within the County for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election. Government Code § 23720(a)

Withdrawing a Signature

A voter who has signed an initiative, referendum, or recall petition pursuant to the Constitution or laws of this state shall have their signature withdrawn from the petition upon filing a written request that includes the name or title of the petition and the voter's name, residence address, and signature with the appropriate county elections official or city elections official *prior to the day the petition is filed*. A written request made under this section shall not constitute a petition or paper for purposes of Section 104. Elections Code § 103

Filing of Petition

Signatures upon petitions and sections thereof shall be secured, and the petition, together with all sections thereof, shall be filed within 180 days from the date of publication of the notice of intention and statement. Filing is with the district elections official. If the petitions are not filed within the time permitted, the petition and its sections shall be void for all purposes.

Elections Code § 9306

Examination of Signatures

Within 30 days from the date of filing of the petition, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, the district elections official shall examine the petition, and from the records of registration ascertain whether the petition is signed by the requisite number of voters. A certificate showing the results of this examination shall be attached to the petition.

Within 30 days from the date of filing of the petition, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, if, from the examination of petitions, it shows that more than 500 signatures have been signed on the petition, the district elections official may use a random sampling technique for verification of signatures. The random sample of signatures to be verified shall be drawn so that every signature filed with the district elections official shall be given an equal opportunity to be included in the sample. The random sampling shall include an examination of at least 500, or 3 percent of the signatures, whichever is greater. A signature shall not be invalidated because of a variation of the signature caused by the substitution of initials for the first or middle name, or both, of the person signing the petition.

If the statistical sampling shows that the number of valid signatures is within 95 to 110 percent of the number of signatures of qualified voters needed to declare the petition sufficient, the district elections official shall, within 90 days from the date of the filing of the petition, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, examine and verify the signatures filed. In determining the number of valid signatures, the district elections official may check the signatures against facsimiles of voters' signatures provided that the method of preparing and displaying the facsimiles complies with law. A signature shall not be invalidated because of a variation of the signature caused by the substitution of initials for the first or middle name, or both, of the person signing the petition.

The district elections official shall notify the proponents of the petition as to the sufficiency or insufficiency of the petition.

If the petition is found insufficient, no further action shall be taken. However, the failure to secure

sufficient signatures, shall not preclude the filing of a new petition on the same subject, at a later date. Elections Code §§ 9308, 9309.

Adopt Ordinance or call Special Election

If the initiative petition is signed by voters not less in number than Ten percent (10%) of the voters in the district, where the total number of registered voters is less than 500,000, or not less in number than Five percent (5%) of the voters in the district, where the total number of registered voters is 500,000 or more, and the petition contains a request that the ordinance be submitted immediately to a vote of the people at a special election, the district board shall do either of the following:

Adopt the ordinance, without alteration, either at the regular meeting at which the certification of the petition is presented, or within 10 days after it is presented.

Submit the ordinance, without alteration, to the voters pursuant to Section 1405.

The number of registered voters referred to in subdivision (a) shall be calculated as of the time of the last report of registration by the county elections official to the Secretary of State made before publication or posting of the notice of intention to circulate the initiative petition. Elections Code § 9310

Withdrawing the Petition

The Proponent of an initiative may withdraw the initiative at any time before the 88th day before the election whether or not the petition has already been found sufficient by the Elections Official. Elections Code § 9311

COUNTY REFERENDA

Submission by Board of Supervisors

The Board of Supervisors may submit to the voters, without a petition, an ordinance for the repeal, amendment, or enactment of any ordinance. The ordinance shall be voted upon at any succeeding regular or special election and, if it receives a majority of the votes cast, the ordinance shall be repealed, amended, or enacted accordingly. Elections Code § 9140

Time Ordinance Shall Take Effect

Except an ordinance granting a franchise, the following ordinances shall take effect immediately:

1. Those calling or otherwise relating to an election.
2. Those specifically required by law to take immediate effect.
3. Those fixing the amount of money to be raised by taxation or the rate of taxes to be levied.
4. Those for the immediate preservation of public peace, health, or safety. The ordinances referred to in this subdivision shall contain a declaration of the facts constituting the necessity and shall be passed by a four-fifths vote of the board of supervisors.

All other ordinances, including ordinances granting a franchise, shall become effective 30 days from and after the date of final passage. Elections Code § 9141

Petition Protesting Adoption of Ordinance

If a petition protesting the adoption of an ordinance is submitted to the county elections official before the effective date of the ordinance, the ordinance shall be suspended and the board of supervisors shall reconsider the ordinance. The petition shall be signed by voters of the county equal in number to at least Ten (10%) percent of the entire vote cast within the county for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election.

Elections Code § 9144

Time to Withdraw Referendum

The proponent of a referendum may withdraw the referendum at any time before the 88th day before the election, whether or not the petition has already been found sufficient by the elections official. Elections Code § 9144.5

Protested Ordinance Submitted to Voters

If the board of supervisors does not entirely repeal the ordinance against which a petition is filed, the board shall submit the ordinance to the voters either at the next regularly scheduled county election occurring not less than 88 days after the date of the order, or at a special election called for that purpose not less than 88 days after the date of the order. The ordinance shall not become effective unless and until a majority of the voters voting on the ordinance vote in favor of it. Elections Code § 9145

Form of Petition

The provisions of the Elections Code relating to the form of petitions, the duties of the county elections official, and the manner of holding elections, when an ordinance is proposed by initiative petition, govern the procedure on ordinances against which a protest is filed. Elections Code § 9146. The heading of a proposed referendum measure shall be in substantially the following form:

Referendum Against an Ordinance Passed by the Board of Supervisors

Each section of the referendum petition shall contain the title and text of the ordinance or the portion of the ordinance that is the subject of the referendum. Elections Code § 9147

DISTRICT REFERENDA

Submission by Governing Board

The governing board of any district that is a local public entity as defined by 900.4 of the Government Code may refer legislative questions to the voters of the district in the same manner as the Board of Supervisors may refer county questions pursuant to Elections Code § 9140. Elections Code § 9342

NOTE: Please see the County Referenda section of this guide.

Petition Protesting Adoption

The voters of any district that is a local public entity as defined by 900.4 of the Government Code, and to which Elections Code § 9300 applies, shall have the right to petition for referendum on legislative acts of the district in the same manner and subject to the same rules as are set forth in Elections Code §§ 9141 through 9147 except that all computations referred to in those sections and officers of the county mentioned in those shall be construed to refer to comparable computations and officers of the district. Elections Code § 9340

Form of Petition

The provisions of the Elections Code relating to the form of petitions, the duties of the county elections official, and the manner of holding elections, when an ordinance is proposed by initiative petition, govern the procedure on ordinances against which a protest is filed. Elections Code § 9146

Protest of Ordinance Submitted to Voters

If the governing body does not entirely repeal the legislative act against which a petition is filed, the governing body shall submit the ordinance to the voters either at the next regularly scheduled county election, occurring not less than 88 days after the date of the order, or at a special election called for that purpose not less than 88 days after the date of the order. The act shall not become effective unless and until a majority of the voters voting on the act; vote in favor of it. Election Code §§ 9145, 9340

NOTE: Please see the District Initiatives section of this guide for further information on petition format and other procedural processes.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE STATEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Political Reform Act requires all proponents of ballot measures and committees supporting or opposing ballot measures, to file campaign disclosure statements disclosing contributions received and expenditures made.

The statutory requirements of the Political Reform Act are now contained in Government Code 81000 et seq. Information and assistance relating to campaign reporting obligations under the Political Reform Act may be obtained from the Fair Political Practices Commission.

Committee Filing Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the committee to be aware of and to file the required campaign disclosure statements in a correct and timely manner.

Where to File

The location in which campaign disclosure statements are to be filed depends entirely upon the jurisdiction the committee is active.

When to File

Refer to the FPPC Filing Schedule by visiting www.fppc.ca.gov

Electronic Filing Requirements for Local Committees

Sacramento County Voter Registration and Elections now requires all committees that receive contributions or make expenditures totaling more than \$1,000 in a calendar year, to electronically file campaign disclosure statements. The County, in partnership with NetFile, now has a web-based data entry filing system that allows committees to electronically create and submit campaign disclosure statements.

Visit www.elections.sacounty.gov and click on the Candidate and Campaigns tab, then Campaign Finance Information, and select the Campaign Disclosure Filing.

Fair Political Practices Commission
1102 Q Street, Ste 3000
Sacramento, CA 95811
www.fppc.ca.gov
advice@fppc.ca.gov
(866) 275-3772

Appendix A - Glossary of Terms

CIRCULATOR	A paid or volunteer person who is a voter or qualified to vote in the state, at least 18 years of age, responsible for acquiring signatures on a section of a petition.
ELECTIONS OFFICIAL	The Registrar of Voters is the elections official for countywide initiatives.
GOVERNING BOARD	For a countywide initiative, the Board of Supervisors of a county. For district actions, the elected board of the district.
NOTICE OF INTENTION	Statement of proponents' desire to circulate a countywide initiative petition, and it may state the reasons for the proposed petition.
PROPONENT	A person who initiates the countywide initiative petition process and has control of the circulation and signature collection for the petition.
RANDOM SAMPLE OF SIGNATURES	Signatures selected at random using a computerized random numbers generator. The sample of signatures for verification is selected in such a manner that every signature filed with the Registrar of Voters has an equal opportunity to be included in the sample.
RAW COUNT	The total number of unverified signatures affixed to a petition and submitted to an elections official.
RESIDENCE	"Residence" for voting purposes means a person's domicile. The domicile of a person is that place in which his/her habitation is fixed, wherein, the person has the intention of remaining, and to which, whenever he/she is absent, the person has the intention of returning. At a given time, a person may have only one domicile.
SECTION OF A PETITION	Page of a petition.
SIGNATURE VERIFICATION	The process of comparing a person's signature on a petition with the signature on file with the voter registration records to determine if they match. The signer must be a duly registered voter qualified to sign the petition in order for the signature to be counted as valid. The address on the petition must match the registered address.

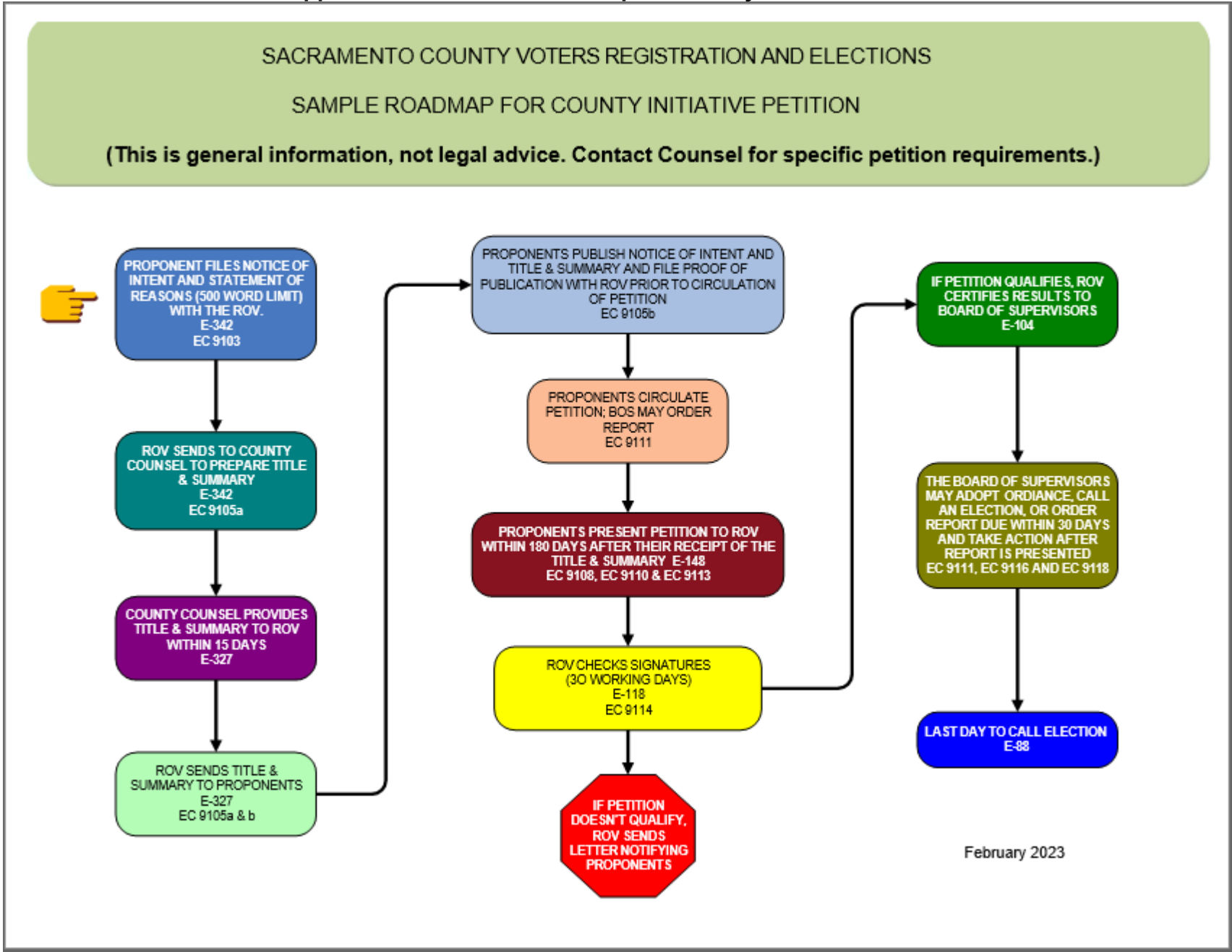
Appendix B – Word Count Guidelines

The following guidelines are used by the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk's Office for counting words on candidate statements, ballot measure text, arguments, rebuttals and other ballot enclosures. The guidelines do **not** apply to ballot designations for candidates. If the text exceeds the specified 200 or 400 word limit, the author will be asked to delete words or change text until the statement conforms with requirements.

1. **PUNCTUATION MARKS** are not counted. Symbols such as "&" (and), and "#" (number/pound) are not considered punctuation and each symbol is counted as one (1) word.
2. **THE WORDS** "I", "a", "the", "and", "an" are counted as individual words.
3. **PROPER NOUNS**, such as geographical names, and names of persons or things, as one (1) word.
EXAMPLE: Gus Enwright = 1 word
"City of Los Angeles" = 1 word
"Dalai Lama" = 1 word
4. **ABBREVIATIONS** such as acronyms or abbreviations for a word, phrase, or expression are counted as one (1) word.
EXAMPLE: CSUS, PTA, USMC, SPD, U.S.M.C.
5. **HYPHENATED WORDS** that appear in any generally available standard reference dictionary published in the U.S. at any time within the last 10 calendar years immediately preceding the election are counted as one (1) word.
EXAMPLE: Attorney-at-law
6. **DATES** are counted as one (1) word.
EXAMPLE: July 21, 1983 18 June, 1987 3/18 7/21/89
7. **NUMERIC COMBINATIONS** are counted as one (1) word.
EXAMPLE: 1973 13 1/2 1971-73 5% 8/3/73 #14
8. **MONETARY AMOUNTS** consisting of a combination of digits are counted as one (1) word.
EXAMPLE: \$1,000.00

MONETARY AMOUNTS consisting of a combination of words and digits are counted as two (2) words.
EXAMPLE: \$4 million
9. **TELEPHONE/FAX NUMBERS** are counted as one (1) word.
EXAMPLE: 1-800-762-8019 1-916-875-6451
10. **INTERNET WEB SITES/E-MAIL ADDRESSES** are counted as one (1) word.
EXAMPLE: <http://www.elections.saccounty.gov>
voterinfo@saccounty.gov

Appendix C – Timeline roadmap for County Initiative Petitions



Appendix D – Sample Time Frames to Qualify a County Initiative

Following are key dates and events. These dates are approximate and can vary due to weekends and holidays.

Dates and events will depend on the **actual date** the proponent files the Notice of Intention, the completion of Title and Summary, and the number of days the proponent takes to circulate the petition. State statute mandates some deadlines; others are suggested time frames in order to provide the maximum amount of time to circulate petitions.

Note: The intended use of this table is as an example of a time frame. Beginning Date and Ending Date are estimates for the timeline.

E-MINUS BEGINNING DATE	E-MINUS ENDING DATE	EVENT
E-447	E-344	County Elections Official receives Notice of Intention and a request that a Ballot Title and Summary be prepared.
E-447	E-344	County Elections Official delivers Notice of Intention and request for Ballot Title and Summary to County Counsel.
E-432	E-329	Within 15 days, County Counsel delivers Title and Summary to the County Elections Official who then delivers to Proponent. (E.C. § 9105(a))
E-431	E-328	Proponent shall, prior to circulation of the Petition, publish the Notice of Intention with Title and Summary and file Proof of Publication with the County Elections Official.
E-251	E-148	Proponent shall submit Petition with signatures within 180 days after Proponent receives Title and Summary from the County Elections Official or after termination of any action for a writ of mandate pursuant to § 9106 and, if applicable, after receipt of an Amended Title or Summary or both, whichever occurs later. (E.C. § 9110)
E-221	E-118	County Elections Official has 30 working days (excluding Saturday, Sunday and holidays) to examine and verify petitions. (E.C. § 9115 (a))
E-220	E-117	County Elections Official submits to the Board of Supervisors an item for the Board Agenda to certify result of the examination.
E-203	E-100	Board of Supervisors may call the election or adopt the ordinance without alteration.
E-88	E-88	Last day Board of Supervisors may consolidate a measure with a regularly scheduled election.
E-89	E-89	County Elections Official will publish the deadline for submitting Arguments.
E-81	E-81	Last date to submit Arguments.
E-81	E-81	Last day for County Counsel to submit Impartial Analysis.
E-80	E-71	Public examination of Arguments/Analysis.
E-71	E-71	Last day to submit Rebuttal Arguments.
E-70	E-61	Public examination of Rebuttals.
E-40	E-21*	Mail Official Sample Ballot Booklets.
0	0	Election Date.
+2	+28	Official Canvass.

LEGEND: E- = Election minus or plus days before or after an election date.

*** E-10 when the election is a presidential primary.**

Appendix E- Sample of Initiative Petition (Including Official Top Funders)

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

Initiative Petition (Including Official Top Funders)

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

The county counsel has prepared the following title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:

(Here set forth the title and summary prepared by the county counsel. This 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))

OFFICIAL TOP FUNDERS. Valid only for [Month, Year¹] [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]

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:

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)]

THIS PETITION MAY BE CIRCULATED BY A PAID SIGNATURE GATHERER OR A VOLUNTEER. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK. [11-point non-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: _____	

DECLARATION OF CIRCULATOR

(to be completed after above signatures have been obtained)

I, _____, am 18 years of age or older. My residence address is

_____. I circulated
(address, city, state, zip)

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.

Executed on _____, _____, at _____.
(month and 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.]

[NOTE: It is recommended that a space approximately 1/2 inch wide be left along the left margin opposite the signatures, as shown, for the clerks’ use in verifying signatures.]

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.

REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY

Appendix F- Sample of Initiative Petition (Excluding Official Top Funders)

[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 county counsel has prepared the following title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:
(Here set forth the title and summary prepared by the county counsel. This 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)]

	<div>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: _____</div> <div>Residence Address ONLY: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____</div>	<div>This column for official use only.</div>
	<div>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: _____</div> <div>Residence Address ONLY: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____</div>	
	<div>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: _____</div> <div>Residence Address ONLY: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____</div>	
	<div>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: _____</div> <div>Residence Address ONLY: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____</div>	

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.
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.]

[NOTE: It is recommended that a space approximately 1/2 inch wide be left along the left margin opposite the signatures, as shown, for the clerks’ use in verifying signatures.]

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.