

## **CALIFORNIA INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM, AND RECALL REFORM ACT (CIRRA) ADVICE, TALKING POINTS, AND QUESTIONS ANSWERED!**

### **1. SIGNATURE GATHERING ADVICE**

- Introductions are the key so please know the basic legal directives of the proposal to help summarize what voters are signing as quickly as possible. It is great to let them just read the proposal summary and the proposal itself and answer any questions they might have, but some folks will want to cut to the chase!
  - i. The CA Secretary of State (SOS) gets 180 days to develop a system that allows a voter to view initiative, referendum and recall petitions on the SOS website and provide the necessary information and electronically sign the petition or download, print and sign a document in portable document format (PDF) that contains a copy of the petition and space for the signer to provide necessary identifying information. The SOS will verify Authenticity.
  - ii. Provide an ongoing tally of signatures on the SOS website.
  - iii. Invite the submission of arguments for and against the measure and post them on the SOS website.
  - iv. Electronic signature submitted to be used to sign an initiative, referendum, or recall shall be deemed to be personally affixed to the petition and the signature shall be treated as a "Signature."
  - v. Electronic signature gathering be applied to city, county and statewide initiative, referendum and recall.
  - vi. The existing pen and paper system was intentionally left in place and remains an option for any proponent to choose to collect signatures the old-fashioned way!

### **2) Talking Points**

- Define initiative, referendum, and recall!
  - i. Initiative is the voter's ability to propose new legislation to the rest of the voters essentially by passing the state legislature to enact new laws! This requires passage and voter approval using the ballot vote process which means all qualified proposals must get ballot vote approved before becoming law!
  - ii. Referendum is simply the people's veto! The voters use this to stop laws passed by our elected officials and signed by the Governor which means any referendum that qualifies for a ballot stops the law in question until the voters have a chance to vote in support of removing the law!
  - iii. Recall is the voter's ability to replace an elected official and force them to defend their office and invite new candidates seeking office to run against them. The voters must return to the ballot and cast their votes to replace the elected official.

## 2. Talking Points (continued)

- This is a solution that ends widespread voter discrimination!
  - i. Electronic signatures are used safely, securely and legally in every type of transaction we use today except when it comes to signing initiatives, referenda and recalls! We even use them currently at all levels of government where the most obvious place we see discrimination is when voters register to vote online directly with the SOS, and the option for the SOS to access our DMV signatures, which are kept electronically, get sent to the SOS database where they in turn use it to validate our incoming pen and paper signatures after we sign petitions! They get to use our electronic signatures to validate us, yet we can't use them to participate in the processes that would allow we the people to control them!
  - ii. Voters are forced to use an antiquated pen and paper system to get tens of thousands, to hundreds of thousands, and even millions of petition signatures, which means we must sort through 40 million people to find the 10 to 20 million voters give or take 5 million, who are actually registered to vote and seek their support. Furthermore, we have to overcome the likelihood that their voter information is not up to date or even accurate due to address changes, name changes, and general uncertainty. When we add all the ways voters and petition circulators can fill out petitions incorrectly according to the various rules any given county may abide by to validate signatures, we see hundreds of thousands of signatures tossed out based on avoidable mistakes. When voters sign more than once this also causes massive amounts of signatures to be lost as each one found causes a 2% reduction off the total!
  - iii. Next, we want to ask voters how they feel about volunteering to sit out in front of grocery stores and soliciting strangers for support or giving their information to strangers and even signing petitions that may be personal in nature in public settings. We have the right to ask if the person circulating is a paid signature gatherer but what about the volunteers making the sacrifice to bring solutions to people just to see if we can find enough people against all these odds and for every issue we ever want to propose to stop or resolve? Sharing that we are regular people trying to make it so other regular people can avoid all of this should help most voters support this petition and solution once they understand what we are actually trying to accomplish. They are being discriminated against as well so this is our common ground!
  - iv. Asking what issues voters would like to address if they had a chance to participate in the legislative process is another way to help them see what electronic signature gathering would do when they could actually propose their own solution or ask for a law that has been passed to be approved by the rest of us and not just a handful of elected officials who are being allowed to control the political narrative here because we do not know how to fix our ability to

stop them. Some folks really do want to leave this up to the elected officials but what happens when those elected officials refuse to represent us? Is voting alone enough to stop them or will the powers that be simply just put in another political pawn to do their bidding? It is best to talk about what is important to the person signing and not dig into our own personal fight unless there is common ground established then this type of connection actually helps!

- v. Simple things to say are; sign the petition to control our politicians, stop legislation without representation, fix political corruption, restore government to so that it is by the people and for the people, and ask folks if they realize that the 4<sup>th</sup> branch of government is inherently the people's branch? We all live with discrimination, corruption and abuse because we do not have a way to effectively participate, be heard and voice our opinions and solutions! This is our opportunity to change all of that and so much more!

### 3. Questions and Answers? Asking questions to spark interest is the name of the game!

- What will this cost
  - i. Please read the fiscal impact report as it has a great summary and also explains the process as well as the history. The bottom line is that this will be a one-time cost in the millions of dollars to put in the new system and there will be some upkeep costs associated as well but the costs of running a pen and paper system no longer being necessary will offset these costs.
  - ii. Yes, the campaign industry surrounding these signature gathering processes will be impacted and the electronic process will change the pen and paper per signature costs but that is something voters should welcome because those costs alone drive these proposals into the millions of dollars where just one or two proposals could pay for the entire electronics system. CA has had as many as 18 proposals recently so this industry would have to adapt.
  - iii. The final point that is made is a concession that a cost savings for CA is also likely and they have to mention this because it is only fair to accept that we are spending way too much on a system that is entirely way too inefficient and people are making lots of money because we have simply not modernized this system!
- What about safety, security and hacking?
  - i. The fact is we have already gone so far beyond this issue being a factor when it comes to electronic signature gathering that folks who argue that it is not safe are being hypocritical as they fail to recognize all of the other applications already in use. I respect their opposition but it is way too late for that argument in my view, but we will give some talking points regardless because that may just be what a voter is hung up on and we do want their signature and support in the end so it is worth educating them. If they are open to seeing the bigger picture.

- ii. Pen and paper signatures can be hacked easily as well when they are given to strangers who get paid money to collect them. So, it already happens and the fact that electronic signatures are more traceable than our pen and paper signatures and the depth to which we can take a two-dimensional ink and paper image and add many dimensions to it to help us with information like where it was signed, when exactly it was signed, who signed it and what exactly was signed and much more gets put into the equation. Voters get the privacy and security of only letting the fact that their signature was used and not have to give anyone other than the SOS who already has everything any more information. The electronic world is far superior to the pen and paper one and that is why we sign for all of our financial transactions, IRS filings, DMV records, business transactions, legal transactions and on and on this way!
  - iii. Technology has the ability to stay on top of and in front of the hacking issue and we actually do have systems that have never been hacked to lead the way! Anything can get hacked at the user interface but that is exactly why we have the ability to reset and restore our passwords and means to identify who we are. Technology is about 30 years past due to be applied to petitions using electronic signatures and that is exactly what corrupt politicians and their special interest backers want us to continue to happen! I have asked every politician in the State legislature to support this at one time or another and only a handful have been brave enough to explore this solution and they all go silent knowing we already have the right to use initiative referendum and recall and this solution would change the way everything they are getting away with works! The odds are that voter confidence will be targeted on the hacking front as they use the media to put fear into folks accepting electronic signatures when we already accept them literally everywhere! Yes, they think we are that stupid and those advertisements and news bulletins will likely increase once the people who are profiting off of our lack of participation decide their ability to control things is under attack!
- There are many great questions and answers that will continue to come up and we will help provide support for but the last one I want to leave with is what will happen when we give our electronic support data to the government in regard to how we support any given issue?
    - i. The first response is that they already have this information and they are legally required to dispose of it once they are finished validating our endorsements and that will continue to be the standard with electronic signature gathering. We did not change the laws surrounding the fact that our voter signatures on petitions are protected as is our privacy. Pen and paper petitions must be destroyed at a given point and so shall the databases be cleared when it is legally acceptable to do so.

- ii. It really helps to understand the entire system down to the legal requirements that go into the design of the petitions all the way up to how signatures are validated. Since most of us do not know much about the details we tend to fear the unknown. The CA Secretary of State website is a great resource and most if not all questions and education can be accomplished there. Of course, there are many other great sources and we have shared some of them throughout this process but it is all readily available to anyone wanting to make an informed decision. The good news is that we are only asking for this to get put on a ballot where the real debate can take place and it should. So even if a voter completely hates the idea, they should consider still signing just to force the debate and if they truly think they are in the right the debate should be easily won in their favor! I can say that after 4 years of learning, questioning, scrutinizing, arguing and debating this topic myself, I can say that my support has done nothing but grow stronger and stronger each step of the way.
- iii. Nothing is perfect and this proposal is just a giant step in the right direction. We will have to sort through many bugs that will pop up along the way and that is to be expected. What is not OK is sitting back and letting things continue to be so dysfunctional that people are being forced out of the state in order to maintain their rights and values! Fighting legislation with legislation is the only way for us to resolve anything without ripping everything apart trying to make the most extreme views the law of the land!

Please visit our website at [www.petitionsafe.com](http://www.petitionsafe.com) to learn more and get involved because we need not just the required 546,651 signatures to get qualified, rather we need in excess of 1,000,000 to endure the inefficiencies of the current pen and paper system! When we are done, we will have the opportunity to convince the rest of the voters who have not had the opportunity to see what this is all about to weigh in and support by voting YES on the California Initiative, Referendum, and Recall Reform Act proposal!

This message is approved by

Yes on the California Initiative, Referendum, and Recall Reform Act FPPC#1420476