

A Guide to Placing a County Initiative on the Ballot

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This guide was developed in an effort to provide answers to questions concerning county initiatives. It is for general information only and does not have the force and effect of law, regulation or rule. In case of conflict, the law, regulation or rule will apply. Persons using this guide must bear full responsibility to make their own determinations as to all legal standards and duties. For information on city initiatives, please contact your City Clerk.

COUNTY INITIATIVE

A LOOK AT THE PROCESS

Notice of Intention: File Notice of Intention with County Clerk with the printed name/s, signature/s, and business or residence addresses of at least one but not more than five proponents. The Notice of Intention includes the written text of the initiative and a request that a ballot title and summary be prepared.

The Notice of Intention may contain a statement not exceeding 500 words, stating the reasons for the petition. (Election Code section 9104)

Title and Summary: The elections official immediately transmits a copy of any proposed measure to county counsel. County Counsel prepares a ballot title and summary not exceeding 500 words. (E.C. 9105(a))

The County Clerk furnishes a copy of the ballot title and summary to the proponents. (E.C. 9105(b))

Appeal: Any elector of the county may seek a writ of mandate requiring the ballot title or summary to be amended. (E.C. 9106)

Publication: Publish for one day the Notice of Intention and the ballot title and summary in a newspaper of general circulation. (E.C. 9105(b))

File Proof: File proof of publication with the County Clerk. (E.C. 9105(b))

Circulation: Proponents may begin to circulate the petitions for voter signatures after publication of the title and summary. Each section of the petition shall include a copy of the Notice of Intention, ballot title and summary. (E.C. 9108)

Proponents have 180 days from the receipt of the title and summary to circulate the petitions. (E.C. 9110)

Reports Ordered: During the circulation of the petition, the Board of Supervisors may refer the proposed initiative to any county agency for a report. The report shall be presented to the Board no later than 30 days after the County Clerk certifies the sufficiency of the petition. (E.C. 9111)

Signature Requirement:

If proponents collect:

10% of the entire vote cast in the county for all candidates for Governor in the last election - then the Board of Supervisors shall either:

- 1) adopt the ordinance without alteration at the meeting at which certification is presented or within 10 days after it is presented; or
- 2) place the measure on the ballot at the next statewide election occurring not less than 88 days after the date of the order unless the ordinance petitioned for is required to be, or for some reason is, submitted to the voters at a special election pursuant to (E.C. 1405(a)); or
- 3) order a report pursuant to E.C. 9111 and once the report is presented, the Board shall either adopt the ordinance within 10 days or order an election. (E.C. 9118)

20% of the entire vote cast in the county for all candidates for Governor in the last election and the **petition contains a request** that the ordinance be submitted immediately to a vote of the people at a special election, then the Board shall either:

- 1) adopt the ordinance without alteration;
- 2) call a special election within 88 and 103 days (if a regular election will be held within 180 days, the measure may be consolidated with that regular election(E.C. 1405 9116): or
- 3) order a report pursuant to E.C. 9111 and once the report is presented, the Board shall either adopt the ordinance within 10 days or order an election. (E.C. 9116)

5% of the entire vote cast in the county for all candidates for Governor is the last election for Proposition 218 measures affecting taxes, assessments or fees. (California Constitution Art. II, Sections 8(b) & 11)

Verification of Signatures: Within 30 days from the date of filing of the petition, excluding weekends and holidays, the elections official shall verify signatures. If the petition is found insufficient, no action shall be taken. If the petition is found to be sufficient, the election official shall certify the results to the Board of Supervisors at the next regular meeting. (E.C. 9115)

Enactment of Ordinance: Ordinances are passed with a majority vote of the voters and shall be considered adopted upon the date the vote is declared by the Board of Supervisors. The ordinance shall go into effect 10 days after that date. (E.C. 9122)

COUNTY INITIATIVE IF THE INITIATIVE GOES TO ELECTION

CALENDAR

The Elections Department will develop a calendar for the election, including dates when arguments, rebuttals, and campaign statements need to be filed.

ARGUMENTS, ETC.

The Election Code Article 3 (commencing with section 9160) shall govern the procedures for submitting arguments for county initiatives.
(E.C. 9120)

CONFLICTING MEASURES

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. (E.C. 9123)

ENACTING CLAUSE

The enacting clause of an ordinance submitted to the voters of a county shall be substantially in the following form:
"The people of the County of Sutter ordain as follows."
(E.C. 9124)

ASSIGNING A LETTER

Letters designating measures will be assigned by the elections official pursuant to Elections Code section 13116. Measures will be assigned in alphabetical order beginning with the letter following the last letter assigned in the previous election and continuing through z, or as close to the end of the alphabet as possible to accommodate all measures filed for the current election. For example, if the previous election ended with measure V, and five measures are on the next ballot, the measures will be assigned A, B, C, D, E rather than W, X, Y, Z, A.

For districts that overlap into other counties, the counties will mutually agree to use a letter designation for the measure that will not conflict or confuse the voter.

Measures will appear on the ballot in the following order: Schools, County, City, District. E.C. 13109

BOARD ACTION

The Board of Supervisors will adopt a resolution calling the election and may consolidate it with other elections being conducted in the same jurisdiction on the same day. (E.C. 10400, 10401)

BALLOT QUESTION

The Statement of all measures submitted to the voters shall be abbreviated on the ballot. The statement shall contain not more than 75 words of each measure to be voted on, followed by the words, "Yes" and "No".(E.C. 13247)

FORM OF BALLOT QUESTION

The ballots used when voting upon a proposed county, city or district ordinance as an initiative measure shall have printed on them the words "Shall the ordinance (stating the nature thereof) be adopted?" Opposite the statement of the ordinance to be voted on, and to its right the words "Yes" and "No" shall be printed on separate lines, with voting squares. A yes vote is in favor of the adoption of the ordinance; a no vote shall be counted against its adoption. (E.C. 13119)

ANALYSES

The county counsel shall prepare a 500-word or less impartial analysis of the measure showing the effect of the measure on the existing law and the operation of the measure.

The county auditor may prepare a fiscal analysis of the affect on county revenues or expenditures. (E.C. 9160)

COUNTY INITIATIVE

HOW TO RAISE OR SPEND MONEY:

FIRST

Obtain a copy of Information Manual D – Campaign Provisions of the Political Reform Act – from the County Clerk.

SECOND

File a 410 – Statement of Organization - with the County Clerk

Any person who receives contributions totaling \$1,000 or more within a calendar year, qualifies as a recipient committee and within 10 days of qualifying must file a Form 410 with the Secretary of State and the County.

A form 410 may be filed prior to qualifying. Upon receipt of the 410, the Secretary of State will issue an identification number which must be included on all campaign disclosure forms.

THIRD

Be prepared to file 460 (long form) or 450 (short form) Pre-Election Statements and Semi-Annual Statements.

These reports detailing your committee's contributions and expenditures are filed at specified times prior to and following the election. There are also various special reports that must be filed to amend forms or to provide supplemental information. You are responsible to know the deadlines and the type of forms you must file.

For technical advice on completing the forms, call the Fair Political Practices Commission at 1-866-275-3772 (1-866-ASK-FPPC); FAX: 916-322-0886; or visit their website at www.fppc.ca.gov

FOURTH

File a Form 410 to terminate the committee upon completion of your initiative efforts.

COUNTY INITIATIVE

A SAMPLE CALENDAR

The following provides an example of the amount of time and deadlines associated with proposing a county initiative.

E=Election Day, followed by the number of days prior to or following the Election Day when the various steps should be taken. Please note that these time frames are approximate.

The calendar is subject to change depending on the actual dates when events happen and in the event the ballot title and summary are challenged and need to be changed.

Once a Notice of Intent is filed, The Elections Department staff will assist in developing a calendar specific to your initiative. State statute mandates some deadlines; others are suggested time frames in order to provide the maximum amount of time to circulate petitions. All codes refer to the Elections Code unless otherwise stated.

- E-383 County Clerk receives Notice of Intent (includes printed name/s, signatures, and business or residence address of proponent/s, written text of the initiative and a request that a ballot title and summary be prepared). (9103, 9104)
- E-383 County Clerk delivers Notice of Intent to County Counsel. (9105a)
- E-368 Within 15 days, County Counsel delivers Title and Summary to County Clerk who then delivers a copy of the Title and Summary to Proponents. (9105a)
- E-367 Proponents shall, prior to circulation of the petition, publish the Notice of Intent with Title and Summary and file proof of publication with the County Clerk. (9105b)

- E-363 Proponents submit petition with signatures within 180 days after proponents receive Title and Summary from County Clerk 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, which occurs later. (9110)
- E-183 County Clerk has 30 working days (Saturdays, Sundays & holidays excluded) to certify results to Board of Supervisors. (9114, 9115)
- E-142 County Clerk submits to the Board of Supervisors an item for the Board agenda. Items have to be noticed 14 days before the board meeting.(county policy)
- E-128 Board of Supervisors has three options to exercise at its meeting where the County Clerk presents its findings that an initiative petition is sufficient.
 1. Adopt the ordinance, without alteration
 2. Call an election (date to be determined by the percentage of voters who signed petition)(1)
 3. Order a report pursuant to section 9111.

(1)

9111. (a) During the circulation of the petition or before taking either action described in subdivisions (a) and (b) of Section 9116, or Section 9118, the board of supervisors may refer the proposed initiative measure to any county agency or agencies for a report on any or all of the following:

- (1) Its fiscal impact.
- (2) Its effect on the internal consistency of the county's general and specific plans, including the housing element, the consistency between planning and zoning, and the limitations on county actions under Section 65008 of the Government Code and Chapters 4.2 (commencing with Section 65913) and 4.3 (commencing with Section 65915) of Division 1 of Title 7 of the Government Code.
- (3) Its effect on the use of land, the impact on the availability and location of housing, and the ability of the county to meet its regional housing needs.
- (4) Its impact on funding for infrastructure of all types, including, but not limited to, transportation, schools, parks, and open space. The report may also discuss whether the measure would be likely to result in increased infrastructure costs or savings, including the costs of infrastructure maintenance, to current residents and businesses.
- (5) Its impact on the community's ability to attract and retain business and employment.
- (6) Its impact on the uses of vacant parcels of land.
- (7) Its impact on agricultural lands, open space, traffic congestion, existing business districts, and developed areas designated for revitalization.
- (8) Any other matters the board of supervisors request to be in the report.

(b) 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.

- E-98 Board to call the election or adopt the ordinance without alteration. (9118)
- E-88 Last day Board can consolidate a measure with a regular election. (10403)
- E-88 Clerk to publish once the deadline for submitting arguments. (9163, & Gov. Code section 6061)
- E-78 Last day to submit direct arguments. (9163)
- Last day for Board of Supervisors to direct County Auditor to write an analysis of a county measure. (9160)
- E-68 Last day to submit rebuttal arguments. (9167)
- Last day for County Counsel (and County Auditor, if previously directed) to submit impartial analysis. (9160)
- E-67 to 10-day public inspection of arguments/analyses.
E-57 (9190)

E-56 Finalize materials for printer.

E-40 to Mailing of sample ballots. (13303, 13304)
E-21

E-36 Receive materials from printer (suggested date)

E-29 Last day to register to vote in order to have election
materials mailed to voters. Absentee period begins. (2102,
2107, 3001, 3003)

E-15 Last day to register to vote.

E-7 Last day to request an absentee ballot by mail. (3001)

E ELECTION DAY

E+2 to Official Canvass
E+28

**** SAMPLE ****
INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED BY VOTERS

(Insert Ballot Title and Summary of Measure in at least 12-point bold type)

The Ballot Title and Summary 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 12-point.

Notice is hereby given by the persons whose names appear hereon of their intention to circulate the petition within the County of Sutter for the purpose of (insert purpose of measure). A statement of the reasons of the proposed action as contemplated in the petition is as follows:

A 500-word statement outlining the reasons for the proposed petition may be printed here. The statement is optional. The notice shall contain the printed name, signature, and business or residence address of at least one, but not more than five, proponents. §9104. To print on the petition, format the signature as "Surname, Address, City, State, Zip". Each section of the petition shall bear a copy of the notice of intention. §9108. So, if it is on the front side, it may be omitted on the back. The law does not specify the type size for the Notice of Intent, but it should be not less than 8-point.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Print in 12-point type, prior to the portion for voters' signatures. §101.

THIS PETITION MAY BE CIRCULATED BY A PAID SIGNATURE GATHERER OR A VOLUNTEER.
 YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK.

1	Print Your Name	Residence Address Only	
	Your Signature as Registered to Vote	City, State	Zip
2	Print Your Name	Residence Address Only	
	Your Signature as Registered to Vote	City, State	Zip
3	Print Your Name	Residence Address Only	
	Your Signature as Registered to Vote	City, State	Zip
4	Print Your Name	Residence Address Only	
	Your Signature as Registered to Vote	City, State	Zip
5	Print Your Name	Residence Address Only	
	Your Signature as Registered to Vote	City, State	Zip

Each petition section shall have attached to it an affidavit to be completed by the circular. §104, 9101. This declaration below may be omitted on front side if signature spaces are provided on both sides. The circulator's declaration must follow the last signature block.

DECLARATION OF PERSON CIRCULATING INITIATIVE (MUST BE IN CIRCULATOR'S OWN HANDWRITING)

I _____ declare:
(Print Name)

- My residence address is _____ in _____ County, California, and I am a registered voter in (insert electoral jurisdiction).
- I personally circulated the attached petition for signing.
- I witnessed each of the appended signatures being written and to the best of my information and belief, each signature is the genuine signature of the person whose name purports to be, and
- The appended signatures were obtained between the dates of _____ and _____, inclusive.
(Starting Date) (Ending Date)

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on _____ at _____, California. _____
(Date) (City or Community Where Signed) (Signature)

Sutter County Elections Policy on Lettering of Local Measures

Pursuant to *California Elections Code 13116*, lettering of measures submitted for the ballot shall be assigned by Sutter County Elections after the deadline set forth by the Registrar.

All letters will be assigned in alphabetical order starting with the letter “A” and continuing through letter “Z”. The order and precedence of all offices and measures that are to be placed on the ballot shall be pursuant to *California Elections Code 13109*. It has been Sutter County Elections policy not to use the following letters:

“F” Some associate this to ‘Fail’

“I” Some associate this with the numeral ‘One’

The letters will continue to be assigned in alphabetical order through the letter “Z”, and then the letters will begin again with the letter “A”.

Sutter County Elections does not permit any requests for letter changes or for specific letter requests for measures.

For districts where overlapping is a consideration the lead county will designate a letter after communication with surrounding counties. The letter chosen will not conflict with other letters in said counties to confuse the voter. Due to this factor, letters assigned to measures may not be in alphabetical order.