## National Conference of State Legislatures

The Forum for America's Ideas

## Signature Requirements for Initiative Proposals

Updated August 2008

|  | Statutory Initiatives |  |  | Constitutional Initiatives |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Signature Formula | 2008 Actual Requirement | Geographic Distribution | Signature Formula | 2008 Actual Requirement | Geographic Distribution |
| Alaska | $10 \%$ of total votes cast in last general election | 23,831 | Signatures from 7\% of those who voted in the previous general election in at least $3 / 4$ of the state's 40 house districts | N/A |  |  |
| Arizona | $10 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 153,365 | None | $15 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 230,047 | None |
| Arkansas | $8 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 61,974 | Signatures equal to $4 \%$ of votes cast for governor in each of at least 15 of the state's 75 counties | $10 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 77,468 | Signatures equal to $5 \%$ of votes cast for governor in each of at least 15 of the state's 75 counties |
| California | $5 \%$ of votes cast for governor at last election | 433,971 | None | $8 \%$ of votes cast for governor at last election | 694,354 | None |
| Colorado | $5 \%$ of votes cast for sec. state at last election | 76,047 | None | $5 \%$ of votes cast for sec . state at last election | 76,047 | None |
| Florida | N/A |  |  | $8 \%$ of total votes cast statewide in last presidential election | 611,009 | $\begin{array}{\|l} \hline 8 \% \text { in at least } 13 \text { of } \\ \text { the state's } 23 \\ \text { congressional } \\ \text { districts } \\ \hline \end{array}$ |

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures

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|  | Signature Formula | 2008 Actual Requirement | Geographic Distribution | Signature Formula | 2008 Actual <br> Requirement | Geographic Distribution |
| Idaho | $6 \%$ of qualified electors at previous election | 45,893 | None (a) | N/A |  |  |
| Illinois | N/A |  |  | $8 \%$ of total votes cast for governor in last election | 279,039 | None |
| Maine | $10 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 55,087 | None | N/A |  |  |
| Massachusetts | To place before the legislature: <br> $3 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election To place on the ballot if the legislature fails to pass: <br> $0.5 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | $\begin{aligned} & 66,593 \\ & + \\ & 11,099 \end{aligned}$ | No more than $25 \%$ of signatures may be from one county | $3 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 66,593 | No more than $25 \%$ of signatures may be from one county |
| Michigan | $8 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 304,101 | None | $10 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 380,126 | None |
| Mississippi | N/A |  |  | $12 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 91,673 | At least 18,355 signatures from each of the 5 congressional districts |
| Missouri | See geographic distribution -- no total signature requirement | 86,989-94,762 ${ }^{\text {d }}$ | $5 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election from 6 of the 9 congressional districts | See geographic distribution -- no total signature requirement | 139,181-151,619 ${ }^{\text {d }}$ | $8 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election from 6 of the 9 congressional districts |


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| Montana | $5 \%$ of qualified electors in state at large | 22,308 | $5 \%$ of qualified voters in each of 34 legislative districts | $10 \%$ of qualified electors in state at large | 44,615 | $10 \%$ of qualified voters in each of 40 legislative districts |
| Nebraska ${ }^{\text {c }}$ | $7 \%$ of registered voters at the filing deadline | 79,605 | $5 \%$ of registered voters in 38 of the 93 counties | $10 \%$ of registered voters at the filing deadline | 113,721 | $5 \%$ of registered voters in 38 of the 93 counties |
| Nevada | $10 \%$ of total votes cast in last general election | 58,627 | See (b) | $10 \%$ of total votes cast in last general election | 58,627 | See (b) |
| North Dakota | $2 \%$ of resident population of the state at the last decennial census | 12,844 | None | $4 \%$ of resident population of the state at the last decennial census | 25,688 | None |
| Ohio | To place before the legislature: <br> $3 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election <br> To place on the ballot if the legislature fails to pass: <br> $3 \%$ of votes cast for governor in the last election. | $\begin{aligned} & \hline 120,683 \\ & + \\ & 120,683 \end{aligned}$ | $1.5 \%$ of total votes cast for governor in each of 44 of the state's 88 counties | $10 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 402,275 | $5 \%$ of total votes cast for governor in each of 44 of the state's 88 counties |
| Oklahoma | $8 \%$ of votes highest vote cast in last state election | 74,117 | None | $15 \%$ of votes cast for office receiving highest number of votes in last state election | 138,970 | None |
| Oregon | $6 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 82,769 | None | $8 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 110,358 | None |


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| South Dakota | $5 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 16,776 | None | $10 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 33,551 | None |
| Utah | Direct - 10\% of votes cast for governor in last election <br> Indirect - To place before the legislature: $5 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election To place on the ballot if the legislature fails to pass: <br> $5 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | Direct - 91,996 <br> Indirect - <br> 45,998 <br> $+$ <br> 45,998 | Direct - 10\% of votes cast for governor in at least 26 of 29 state senate districts <br> Indirect - 5\% of votes cast for governor in at least 26 of 29 state senate districts |  | N/A |  |
| Washington | $8 \%$ of votes cast for governor in last election | 224,880 | None |  | N/A |  |
| Wyoming | $15 \%$ of total votes cast in last general election | 29,433 | $15 \%$ of residents in at least $2 / 3$ of the state's 23 counties |  | N/A |  |

(a) Idaho's geographic distribution requirement was held unconstitutional by US District Court in December 2001, and that decision was upheld by $9{ }^{\text {th }}$ Circuit Court of Appeals in September 2003. It required that signatures include $6 \%$ of the registered voters in each of 22 counties.
(b) Nevada's geographic distribution requirement was held unconstitutional in August 2004. It required that signatures come from $10 \%$ of the total votes cast in the last general election in at least 13 of the state's 17 counties. Two new provisions were passed in the 2007 legislative session: One requires that petitions comply with a geographic distribution requirement that is still county-based, but is flexible in that each county's total required signatures is calculated by a formula based on population. This provision is currently in effect for the 2008 election. A second measure that was passed is a constitutional amendment and therefore will require voter approval in two consecutive general elections. This provision replaces the county-based geographic distribution requirement with a requirement that each petition contain the signatures of $10 \%$ of voters in each Congressional district.
(c) 2008 requirement not yet determined. Total listed here was effective for 2006 initiatives.
(d) The total number of signatures required varies depending on the combination of districts presented in petitions. Source: National Conference of State Legislatures, October 2007

## Source: National Conference of State Legislatures <br> October 2007

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