

The Ballot Measure Process

The Washington State Constitution gives voters two methods of legislative power — the initiative and the referendum.

While differing in process, both initiatives and referenda leave ultimate legislative authority in the hands of the people.

The Initiative

Any registered voter may propose an initiative to create a new state law or to amend or repeal an existing law.

Initiatives to the People are submitted for a vote of the people at the next state general election, if certified to have sufficient signatures.

Initiatives to the Legislature are submitted to the Legislature at its regular session in January, if certified to have sufficient signatures.

A **yes** vote will make an initiative law.

A **no** vote will prevent an initiative from becoming law.

For an initiative to appear on the ballot, the sponsor must circulate the complete text of the proposal among voters and obtain a number of voters' signatures equal to **8 percent** of the total number of votes cast for the office of Governor at the last regular gubernatorial election.

Initiative measures appearing on the ballot require a simple majority vote to become law (except for gambling or lottery measures, which require 60 percent approval).

The Referendum

Any registered voter may demand that a law proposed by the Legislature be referred to voters prior to taking effect.

Referendum Bills are proposed laws referred to voters by the Legislature.

Referendum Measures are laws recently passed by the Legislature that voters have demanded, by petition, be referred to voters prior to taking effect.

A vote to **approve** will confirm the law.

A vote to **reject** will repeal the law.

For a referendum measure to appear on the ballot, the sponsor must circulate among voters the text of the legislative act, and obtain a number of voters' signatures equal to **4 percent** of the total number of votes cast for the office of Governor at the last regular gubernatorial election.

A referendum certified to the ballot must receive a simple majority vote to become law (except for gambling and lottery measures, which require 60 percent approval). Emergency legislation is exempt from the referendum process.

Please note: The information here is not intended as a substitute for the statutes governing initiative and referendum processes, but rather should be read in conjunction with them.

For more information go to www.vote.wa.gov and select "Initiatives and Referenda."