



A Description of State Ballot Measures

Legislative Bond Measure

Any bill that calls for the issuance of general obligation bonds must be adopted in each house of the Legislature by a two-thirds vote, be signed by the Governor and approved by a simple majority of the voters voting to be enacted. An overview of the state bond debt is included in every ballot pamphlet when a bond measure is on the statewide ballot.

Legislative Constitutional Amendment

This is an amendment to the California State Constitution that is proposed by the Legislature. It must be adopted in the Senate and the Assembly by a two-thirds vote of each house's members before being placed on the ballot. A legislative constitutional amendment does not require the Governor's signature. A simple majority of the public's vote enacts the amendment.

Legislative Initiative Amendment

Unless an initiative specifically allows for the Legislature to amend its provisions, the Legislature must submit any amendments to previously-adopted initiatives it proposes to the voters. An amendment requires a majority vote of the Senate and Assembly and must be signed by the Governor. If the measure gets more yes than no votes on the ballot, it becomes law.

Initiative

Often called "direct democracy", the initiative is the power of the people to place measures on the ballot. These measures can include proposals to create or change statutes, amendments to the Constitution or general obligation bonds. In order for an initiative that sets or changes state law to qualify to appear on the ballot, petitions must be turned in that have signatures of registered voters equal in number to 5% of the votes cast for all candidates for Governor in the last election. An initiative amending the State Constitution requires signatures equaling 8% of the gubernatorial vote. Again, the statewide vote to enact an initiative only requires a simple majority vote.

Referendum

Referendum is the power of the people to approve or reject statutes adopted by the Legislature, except those that are urgency, that call for elections, or that provide for tax levies or appropriations for usual current expenses of the state. Voters wishing to block implementation of a legislatively adopted statute must gather signatures of registered voters equal in number to 5% of the votes cast for all candidates for Governor in the last election within ninety days of enactment of the bill. Once on the ballot, the law proposed by the Legislature is blocked if voters cast more no votes than yes votes on the question.