

**The Basic Steps To Do An Initiative In Ohio**  
**Statutes And Amendments – Indirect Initiative Process (Statutes)**  
**Direct Initiative Process (Amendments)**

**Basic procedures:** Filing an initiative is a very simple process in Ohio. First, the proponent of the measure must designate a committee of not less than three (3) nor more than five (5) persons to represent them in all matters relating to the petition. Second, the written petition signed by 100 electors must be submitted to the Attorney General with the full text and summary of the proposed statute. The Attorney General certifies if, in her opinion, the summary is a fair and truthful statement of the proposed statute. A verified copy of the statute, together with the summary and Attorney General's certification must then be filed with the Secretary of State. Petitioners draw up the petition. It may be made up of part-petitions, but all separate petitions shall be filed at one time as one instrument. Each part-petition must have a copy of the full text of the proposed statute. The heading must be as specified in Art. II, Sec. 1b and R.C. 3519.05.

**Date initiative language can be submitted to the state for the November 2001 or 2002 election:** No Deadline

**Signatures tied to vote of which office:** Governor

**Next Gubernatorial election:** 2002

**Votes cast for governor in last election:** 3,346,238 (1998)

**Net number of signatures required:** For constitutional amendments, the total number of signatures must equal at least ten percent (10%) of the total vote cast for the office of governor at the last gubernatorial election (334,624 signatures). For statutes, the total number of signatures on the petition must equal at least three percent (3%) of the total vote cast for the office of governor at the last gubernatorial election (100,387). The Secretary of State may not accept for filing any initiative petition that does not purport to contain at least the minimum number of signatures required. If the General Assembly adopts the law then no additional signatures are needed. If the General Assembly fails to enact the proposed statute, passes it in amended form, or takes no action within four (4) months from the time it was received by the General Assembly, supplemental petitions may be circulated by the petitioners demanding that the proposal be submitted to the electors at the next general election. The supplemental petition must contain signatures of electors equal to three percent (3%) of the most recent vote for governor (another 100,387). Such petition must be signed and filed with the Secretary of State within ninety (90) days after the General Assembly fails to enact the

proposed statute, passes it in amended form, or takes no action within four (4) months from the time it was received by the General Assembly. The petition may present the proposed law as worded on the original petition or with any amendments incorporated by the General Assembly.

**Distribution requirement:** The signatures for both amendments and statutes must be obtained from at least 44 of the 88 counties of the state. For statutes: From each of these 44 counties, there must be signatures equal to at least one and five-tenths percent (1.5%) of the total vote cast for the office of governor in that county at the last gubernatorial election. For amendments: From each of these 44 counties, there must be signatures equal to at least five percent (5%) of the total vote cast for the office of governor in that county at the last gubernatorial election.

**Circulation period:** unlimited

**Do circulators have to be residents:** No

**Date when signatures are due for certification:** For Statutes: The petition must be filed with the Secretary of State not less than ten (10) days prior to commencement of any session of the General Assembly. Legislative sessions begin on the first Monday in January. Filing must be accompanied by a twenty-five dollar (\$25.00) filing fee. The Secretary of State transmits the proposal to the General Assembly as soon as it convenes. For Amendments: The petition must be filed with the Secretary of State not later than ninety (90) days prior to the General Election at which the amendment is to be submitted. (Early August of each year.)

**Signature verification process:** The petition and signatures on such petition shall be presumed to be in all respects sufficient, unless, it shall be otherwise proved, and in such event ten (10) additional days shall be allowed for the filing of additional signatures. Each signer must be a qualified elector of the state. Each part-petition must contain signatures of electors of only one county. If a part-petition contains signatures of more than one county, the Secretary of State determines the county from which the majority of signatures came from, and only signatures from that county will be counted.

**Single-subject restriction:** Yes

**Legislative Tampering:** The legislature can both repeal and amend initiatives.

**General comments:** The committee named on the petition may prepare an argument and/or explanation in favor of the amendment. The argument and/or explanation in opposition to the amendment is

prepared by persons named by the General Assembly, if in session, or if not in session, by the Governor. The arguments and/or explanations may not exceed 300 words and must be filed with the Secretary of State not later than seventy-five (75) days before the election.