A total of 2,653 state-level initiatives have been on the ballot since the first ones went before the voters in Oregon in 1904 through the end of 2021, and 1,110 (42 percent) have been approved.

The modern initiative movement began in the late 1970s with California’s tax-cutting Proposition 13. Initiative use exploded in the following decades, reaching a peak of 382 in the 1990s, 177 of which were approved.

The first decade of the new century saw a total of 375 initiatives, with 158 passing. Initiative activity appears to have slowed slightly in the most recent decade.

Twenty-four states have had at least one initiative during the period 1904-2021. California has the most, with 386, followed closely by Oregon with 375, and they have an identical 35 percent approval rate. Colorado (246), North Dakota (197), and Washington (188) round out the top five.

This report summarizes state-level initiative activity during the period 1904-2021. The figures show the total number of initiatives, and (shaded) the number that were approved. A complete year-by-year count is on the second page.
This information is drawn from the IRI Initiatives Database, which is available for research purposes. The report covers initiatives, proposed laws placed on the ballot by petition. It does not include popular/veto referendums or measures placed on the ballot by the legislature.