



November 3, 2025

Hon. Rob Bonta
Attorney General
1300 I Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

Attention: Ms. Anabel Renteria
Initiative Coordinator

Dear Attorney General Bonta:

Pursuant to Elections Code Section 9005, we have reviewed the proposed initiative regarding elections in California (A.G. File No. 25-0019, Amendment No. 1).

BACKGROUND

Citizen Initiatives. The State Constitution allows voters to propose laws and amendments to the Constitution through the citizen initiative process. In order for a proposal to go to a statewide vote, supporters of citizen initiatives must collect enough signatures to qualify the proposal for the ballot. Prior to 2011, qualified citizen initiatives appeared on statewide primary and general election ballots. In 2011, however, the Legislature passed and the Governor signed a law that made citizen initiatives ineligible for statewide primary ballots.

PROPOSAL

Allow Citizen Initiatives to Appear on Statewide Primary Election Ballots. The measure would undo the law passed in 2011. As a result, qualified citizen initiatives could appear on statewide primary ballots.

FISCAL EFFECTS

Likely Increased Elections Costs. Allowing citizen initiatives to appear on statewide primary ballots likely would increase state and local government elections costs because more initiatives likely would qualify for statewide elections. In the roughly ten years before the 2011 law change, about 30 more citizen initiatives qualified for the ballot than in the roughly ten years after the law change. If more citizen initiatives were to qualify for the ballot, state and local government


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costs would be higher in statewide election cycles. Costs for the state could be in the low millions of dollars for printing and mailing costs associated with the *Voter Information Guide* for each statewide election cycle. Costs for county governments would depend on whether the additional initiatives would require county elections officials to use more pages for the ballot. These new costs could be in the low tens of millions of dollars for each statewide election cycle. Overall, however, the extent of the increased costs from the change is unknown because it would depend on whether more citizen initiatives qualify for the ballot.

Summary of Fiscal Effects. We estimate that this measure would have the following major fiscal effect:

- Likely increased costs to state and local governments, possibly up to the low tens of millions of dollars each statewide election cycle. The extent of the increased costs would depend on whether more citizen initiatives qualify for the ballot.

Sincerely,

for Gabriel Petek
Legislative Analyst

for Joe Stephenshaw
Director of Finance