

The race to the November ballot



Yue Stella Yu
Bridge Michigan
syu@bridgemi.com
Twitter: @bystellayu

Ballot initiatives — How the process works in Michigan

Amend the state's constitution:

- Deadline - 5 p.m. July 11
- Requirement - 425,059 valid signatures (10 percent of last gubernatorial election)
- The initiative can appear on the ballot by a two-thirds vote in each of the legislative chambers, allowing petition groups to circumvent the signature requirements.

Establish a new law: (MI one of two dozen states allowing initiative legislation, per NCSL)

- Deadline - 5 p.m. June 1
- Requirement - 340,047 valid signatures (8 percent of last election)
- Legislature has 40 days to adopt, reject or ignore. If not adopted, the measure goes on the ballot.

Referendum to repeal a newly-enacted law:

- Deadline - within 90 days after the law is enacted
- Requirement - 212,530 valid signatures (5 percent).

Field of initiatives — and gubernatorial candidates — thinning

Who remains in the race — for now?

- 5 out of 10 GOP gubernatorial hopefuls amid legal fights

Tudor Dixon, Ryan Kelley, Kevin Rinke, Ralph Rebandt, Garrett Soldano

- 1 out of 9 initiative legislation proposals

Michiganders for Fair Lending

- 4 constitutional amendment proposals, with one guaranteed on the ballot

Voters for Transparency and Term Limits, Reproductive Freedom for All, Promote the Vote 2022, MI Right to Vote

Signature forgery scandal, soaring signature costs roil campaigns

- 36 fraudulent circulators identified by state, with 30 working on multiple gubernatorial campaigns
- “Round-robin” technique — petitioners filling each other’s sheets with names from a list of legitimate voters
- Experts say high costs per signature may have “incentivized” forgery
- Inflation, labor shortage, high demand led to rising costs

Ballot initiative campaigns seek another chance. Is it doable?

Secure MI Vote, Let MI Kids Learn, etc continue collecting signatures

Bureau of Elections has no legal obligation to review those signatures right away

Signatures submitted after November must be based on voter turnout this year

Campaigns may face a less favorable Legislature

Debate over potential legislative reform?

Proponents: Reform is needed to rein in forgery operations

Opponents: Responsibility to check signatures rest with campaigns

Reality: past attempts to reform the industry were blocked

Moving forward?

Ballot initiatives could boost voter turnout (e.g.: Reproductive Freedom for All reported gains in volunteer efforts)

Gubernatorial field likely will see costly write-in campaigns (James Craig, Perry Johnson, etc)

Would investigations into fraudulent signatures yield prosecution and spark policy changes?

Questions