



HB22-1045 – Statutory Initiative Petition Signature Requirements

Thank you Chairman Kennedy and distinguished members of the committee. My name is Holly Monkman, I reside in Boulder, and I'm a member of the League of Women Voters of Colorado. I am testifying in opposition to House Bill 1045.

The League of Women Voters of Colorado has an enduring record of opposing geographical requirements on the gathering of petition signatures. As early as 1997 the League opposed legislation calling for a geographical spread of petition signatures for constitutional amendments.

The League of Women Voters of Colorado works to empower voters which includes having a means for citizen-initiated ballot issues that aren't prohibitively expensive or difficult to organize. In the 110 years that Colorado has permitted citizen-initiated ballot issues, 183 have made it to the ballot. Out of that, 66 have been approved by the voters. So it's not that easy to get an issue on the ballot, nor is it that easy to get it approved.

Secondly, a geographical distribution requirement would give voters in any single state senate district the ability to overrule voters from every other district. For state-wide issues, this is antithetical to democracy.

The League opposes House Bill 1045 and I ask you to please vote no. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to testify.

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The varying sizes of our new state senate districts, means that the cost of running a signature campaign would vary greatly between districts. Our smallest district is a bit over 18 square miles while the largest is a bit over 25,000 square miles.

The **cost per required signature (CPRS)** is a comparison of the amount of money spent on the petition drive to the number of signatures the state requires for an [initiative](#) or [veto referendum](#) to make the ballot.

The chart below shows the lowest non-zero CPRS, the average CPRS, and the largest CPRS for years from 2010 through 2021:

Year	Lowest (non-zero)	Average ¹¹	Highest
2021	\$6.97	\$14.74	\$32.49
2020	\$1.30	\$8.09	\$24.20
2019	\$2.15	\$2.69	\$3.22
2018	\$0.07	\$6.52	\$25.86

In 1912, Colorado began permitting citizen-initiatives. According to a *Colorado Politics* article from October 15, 2021, out of the 183 citizen initiatives that have made it to the ballot, 36% have won approval. That's 66 since over 110 years.

LWVCO Positions for Action, Pg. 26 Initiative Process

We opposed legislation calling for a geographical spread of signature requirements for constitutional amendments in 1997. It failed.

In 2008 SCR3 was introduced. It was another attempt to increase the number of petition signatures for a constitutional amendment, a geographic distribution of petition signatures, and a six-year protection from changes to statutory initiatives unless the General Assembly reached a two-thirds vote to change. LWVCO opposed the geographic distribution. This ballot issue failed.

In 2016 an initiated proposal appeared on the ballot to make it more difficult to get a constitutional amendment adopted. The measure passed. Also known as "Raise the Bar," it requires that two percent of registered voters in each of the state's 35 senate districts are needed to get a constitutional proposal on the ballot. In addition it requires that 55 percent of the voters must vote yes to pass an amendment. (LWVCO was neutral on the amendment as it favored the 55% to pass but didn't like the geographical requirement.)