



Issue: Ballot Initiative Process

Bills: H.B. 133 (Initiative Amendments); H.B. 145 (Citizen Political Process Amendments); H.B. 88 (Statewide Initiative Process Amendments)

Sponsors: Rep. Brad Daw; Rep. Norm Thurston; Rep. Merrill Nelson

What they do:

Rep. Daw's H.B. 133 would delay the effective date of initiatives until after the next Utah Legislative session—or even longer if the initiative includes a tax increase. For example, were H.B. 131 to become law, if Utah voters pass an initiative in November 2020, the earliest effective date for the law to take effect would be 60 days after the last day of the 2021 legislative session (approximately mid-May 2021). If the initiative included a tax increase, the earliest effective date for the law would be January 1, 2022—more than 400 days after voters approved the initiative.

Rep. Thurston's H.B. 145 would alter the signature collection and reporting process for statewide initiatives. This bill would allow signature collection and removal attempts to occur at the same time (Note: Under current law, there is a 30-day window to remove signatures after the collection period ends). Initiative campaigns would turn in their signature packets every two weeks for county clerks to post online.

Rep. Nelson's H.B. 88 would streamline the signature collection and removal process by setting a single deadline—April 15—as the final date that changes can be made to add or remove signatures.

Why it matters:

The Utah Constitution allows the creation of laws through both the Legislature and voter-approved initiatives. However, when Utah voters passed three initiatives in the November 2018, some Utah lawmakers expressed concerns about creating state laws in this manner—and vowed to restrict the initiative process even more.

Key Question:

Should the Utah legislature place more limits on the ballot initiative process?

Instructions: As a group, spend the next five minutes crafting a pitch to lobby your expert to protect the ballot initiative process in Utah,