

Voting Restoration & Democracy Act of 2018

Talking Points and Instructions for Collecting Petition Signatures

TALKING POINTS

Engaging People:

- “Excuse me, would you sign this petition to support voting rights for all?”
- “Would you sign this petition to remove unjust voting restrictions on incarcerated people?”
- “Would you sign this petition to end harsh voter disenfranchisement and support democracy?”

VRDA Facts:

- This initiative would remove voting restrictions for people in state prison and on parole in California, affecting about 162,000 people.
- If passed, California would join states like Maine and Vermont that never remove a person’s voting rights because they go to prison.

Helpful Facts/Statistics:

- Access to voting is linked to lower recidivism, meaning ending voting restrictions can improve public safety.
- The U.S. is one of the only developed countries to remove voting rights when a person is incarcerated, and Human Rights Watch has said we have some of the “harshest felony disenfranchisement laws in the world”. Countries such as France, the Netherlands, Canada, and Japan never remove a person’s ability to participate in their democracy because of a conviction.
- People in county jail and on probation already have had their voting restrictions eliminated, this initiative expands that to all currently and formerly incarcerated people in CA.

INSTRUCTIONS

Be careful to follow these directions very closely.

Failure to follow these instructions can make the signatures you collect invalid!

1. **Who can circulate:** Anyone over the age of 18 can collect petition signatures.
2. **Who can sign a petition:** Registered voters only. You can register yourself or others to vote by picking up a registration form at any library, post office, or DMV, or you can register online at: <http://registertovote.ca.gov/> To be eligible to register to vote, you must be:
 - a. 18 years old or older (or 18 before the next election)
 - b. A U.S. citizen
 - c. Not currently in prison or on parole for the conviction of a felony. Please note that you CAN register to vote in county jail, on county probation, or if you have an old felony and are no longer on parole.
3. **Where to circulate:** You have the right to circulate in:
 - a. Public places as long as you are not blocking walkways or creating a disturbance.
 - b. Multi-use lots and storefronts such as strip malls, outdoor malls, or any venue with a lot more than one business (protected by *Pruneyard v. Robins*).
 - c. Single-use lots and indoor malls such as storefronts with one business and large indoor shopping malls *only if you ask for permission first*.

4. How to fill out the petition:

- Ask the signer if they are a registered voter, and if so, what county they are registered in.
- Make sure that only registered voters sign, and that you write the county they are registered in at the top of the petition where it says, "All signers of this petition must be registered to vote in _____ County." Only voters in that county may sign that page.
- Ask the person to write clearly, printing their name and residence address, then sign.
- Make sure the full text of the initiative is attached *at all times* to the signature page.
- Do not write in blank columns on left and right of signatures.
- If someone makes a mistake, cross out that signature line and ask them to fill out the next line.

5. Declaration of the Circulator:

- When you have filled up a signature page, you must complete the Declaration of the Circulator at the bottom of the page.
- Write your full name, residence address, the dates in which you circulated that petition, the date you signed the declaration, the place (city) you signed, and then your signature.

SAMPLE PETITION

Title & Summary - This is where the title and summary of the Voting Restoration and Democracy Act is. It is provided for voters to read. *Full text of the initiative must be attached to the signature page.*

County - You must make sure that registered voters are signing a petition form for the county they live and are registered to vote in.

Signatures - This is where people will sign the petition. **ONLY REGISTERED VOTERS MAY SIGN.** Ask signers to write **CLEARLY**, spell things out completely, and sign as registered to vote.

Declaration of Circulator - Here you state, under penalty of perjury, that you witnessed all of the signatures, the information is true to the best of your knowledge, and that you will not use the information for your own purposes.

You must also write the dates you circulated for that particular page, and the date and city where you turn the petition in. *If this section is not filled out, none of the signatures will count!*

The sample petition form contains the following sections and text:

- Title & Summary:** (24 one-inch thick spaces may be left at the top of each page of the petition. (10%)
The Attorney General of California has prepared the following circulating title and summary of the chief purposes and points of the proposed measure:
(Here we form the unique numeric identifier followed by the circulating title and summary prepared by the Attorney General. This unique numeric identifier and circulating title and summary must also be printed across the top of each page of the petition whenever signatures are to appear, in Roman hollow type not smaller than 10-point. (1 9889))
- NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:**
THIS PETITION MAY BE CIRCULATED BY A PAID-SIGNATURE GATHERER OR A VOLUNTEER. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK. (12-point type (1 101))
THE PROPOSERS OF THIS PROPOSED INITIATIVE MEASURE HAVE THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW THIS PETITION AT ANY TIME BEFORE THE MEASURE QUALIFIES FOR THE BALLOT. (12-point type (1 101))
- COUNTY:** _____
- REGISTERED VOTERS ONLY:** A table with 10 rows and 4 columns: Name, Address, City, and State.
- DECLARATION OF CIRCULATOR:** (To be completed after all other signatures have been obtained).
I, _____, am 18 years of age or older. My residence address is _____.
I circulated this section of the petition and witnessed each of the appended signatures being written. Each signature on this petition is, to the best of my information and belief, the genuine signature of the person whose name it purports to be. All signatures on this document were obtained between the dates of _____ and _____.
I certify under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.
Executed on _____ at _____ of _____, State of California.
(Signature required following full name of circulator)

Mail all completed petitions to:

Initiate Justice
PO Box 4962
Oakland, CA 94605

Questions? Email us!

initiatejustice@gmail.com