Pols Don’t Like Recalls

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California State Senator Josh Newman has, for now, withdrawn a bill to let elected officials facing a recall see the names of petition signers so that they may be asked if they really mean it.

The Democrat complains that critics call his bill “an attack on not just the recall but on them and their constitutional rights. It wasn’t a good context to have a conversation.”

So unfair!

The willingness of defenders of petition rights to speak up does sound pretty inconvenient for foes of this popular democratic check on power.

Years ago, in other states, opposition campaigns sent retired FBI agents to knock on doors. Legal, but very intimidating. Which is why California does not make the names public.

The legislation would not have applied to the current petition drive to recall California Governor Gavin Newsom, an effort going splendidly with more than 1.5 million signers. But Newman’s bill was clearly motivated by the success of this campaign.

Or perhaps it’s residual animosity toward the recall process . . . from Sen. Newman himself, having been recalled by voters in 2018. (He came back to win election once again in 2020.)

Of course, signing a petition in itself says “I want this question on the ballot.” If a petition signer changes his mind, there is a process to retract it. No bullying follow-up needed.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.