



Official Ballot Lies

August 12, 2026

With Republicans controlling most state legislatures, legislative assaults against the citizen initiative petition process tend to come disproportionately from Republicans. Just last week, Missouri voters [smashed](#) a legislative initiative petition "[reform](#)" on the primary ballot with greater than 80 percent voting NO.

In Democratic controlled states, however, attempts to thwart democracy bear Democrats' fingerprints. A *Wall Street Journal* editorial [recounts](#) cases in California, Colorado and Washington where citizen petitions have been or are being deep-sixed on dubious legal grounds.

"In 2023 California Gov. Gavin Newsom sued to block a citizen initiative that sought to require a two-thirds vote of the Legislature and vote of the people for major fee and tax increases such as the cap-and-tax program," the paper explains. Let's vote!

But the California Supreme Court labeled the measure a "constitutional revision" preventing a vote of the people.

Colorado Democrats have been hiking fees, rather than taxes, because their constitution requires a public vote to raise taxes. Citizens petitioned a measure onto this November's ballot to more clearly define fees and require a vote to hike them.

Colorado's all-Democrat appointed Supreme Court blocked a vote, arguing there was "a danger of log rolling because it may attract a 'yes' vote from voters who support statewide voter approval of fees, but who would not support narrowing the definition of existing and new fees under Colorado law."

In Washington state, Democrats passed a 9.9% tax on income above \$1 million. Then, voters "launched a ballot campaign to repeal the tax and bar the state and localities from enacting income taxes in the future," *The Journal reports*. "The initiative qualified for the November ballot [last] month."

Now, through a new law passed by the Democrats, the attorney general is required to place this specific language on the ballot after a short summary of the proposal: "This measure would decrease funding for public K-12 education, higher education (including universities and community colleges), and human services (primarily healthcare)."

Yet, the ballot measure would repeal a tax that hasn't yet begun collecting money — no cuts would ensue. Moreover, even if spending reductions had been required, the legislature would be free to make cuts in other programs and not these three areas.

So, the mandated language put to voters on their ballot? A lie.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.