

Citizen Initiative: By the People, For the People

Position Proposed for Adoption by LWVNC

April 2025

Intro: Citizen Initiative (CI)



- Enables voters to collect signatures and put a law or constitutional amendment directly on the ballot
- A year of study, consideration, and input from membership
- Recommending LWVNC concur with Alabama's position on Citizen Initiative

Why Citizen Initiative?

- Currently: ALL laws and constitutional amendments MUST go through the NC state legislature
- Gridlock? Nonresponsive? NC voters have no recourse
- With CI, voters can take issues directly to voters



How does CI work?



NCGA Not
Responsive
to Voters



Gather
Support
from Voters
(with guardrails)



Submit to
Voters



Enacted Law or
Constitutional
Amendment

**Reproductive
rights**

**Legalize
marijuana**

**Raise
minimum
wage**

**Top four
primaries**

**Ranked choice
voting**

**Protect same-sex
marriage**

**Independent
redistricting
commission**

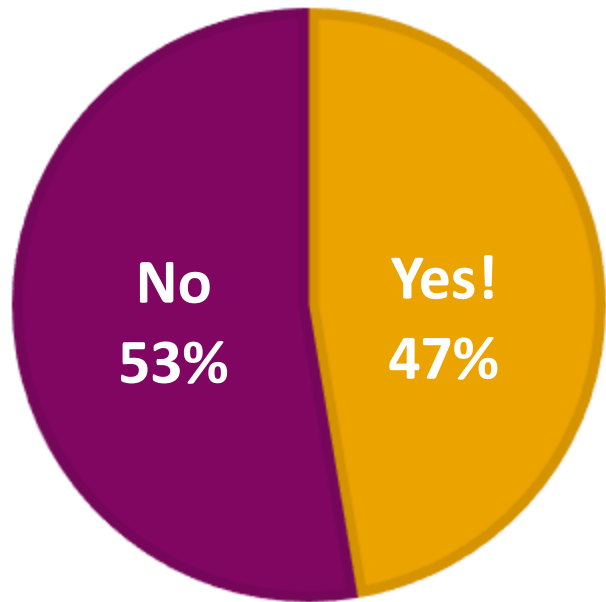
**Paid
leave**

**Modify criminal
sentencing**

2024

- NC Voters can consider only what the legislature wants us to consider
- About half of U.S. states have some kind of initiative process
- Citizen-initiated ballot measures were considered in 2024 that addressed these subjects and more!

57 Citizen-initiated
Ballot Measures,
27 passed



2024 U.S. Citizen Initiatives

- In 2024, 41 states considered 159 ballot measures
- Across 18 states, 57 measures were citizen-initiated
- Nearly half approved by voters

Source: Ballotpedia



Enabling CI in North Carolina

- Requires a state constitutional amendment
- This position provides a framework for what we would like to see in that constitutional amendment

Why Alabama?

- Only existing position to explicitly address the critical need to protect representative and deliberative democracy.
- Provides sufficient detail to guide efforts in working towards a constitutional amendment that would enable CI.
- Not so specific that it hampers ability to negotiate to a workable solution.
- Addresses all 3 aspects of CI: preparation of an initiative, collection of signatures, and the campaign for passage and vote.

Preparation of Citizen Initiatives

- Clear to the voter
- Limit each Initiative to a single subject
- Protect constitutional rights
- Financial disclosures from sponsors
- Prohibit refiling of a failed Initiative for two years

- A reasonable time for collection
- Signatures from registered voters across all areas of the state.
- Financial disclosure from all organizations collecting signatures
- Minimum number of signatures based on established criteria
- Signatures validated *before* the initiative appears on a ballot

Collection of Signatures

Campaign for Passage and Vote

- Impartial analysis of the legal, level of service and fiscal consequences
- Only on general election ballots
- Laws require a simple majority vote
- Constitutional amendments need more than a majority
- Legislature can enact a law proposed by CI without the necessity for a ballot vote, if it is unchanged
- Legislature cannot change unless *both* the original and alternative measures are put before voters to choose

Discussion



Say “Yes” to CI at Convention!



**Not attending?
Still time to sign-up!**

**Talk to your League’s
delegates!**

**Talk to your League
President!**