



Fake Reform

The 2010 Illinois Governor Recall Amendment

The Problem

Blago, Ryan, Walker—Illinois has a sorry history of crooked governors.

Currently, the Illinois General Assembly has a monopoly on the gubernatorial removal process by way of impeachment proceedings. Citizen-initiated recall is one way to vest citizens with the ability to remove corrupt or poorly performing elected officials from office. Unfortunately, the Governor Recall Amendment on the November 2010 statewide ballot isn't the reform that Illinoisans deserve.

House Joint Constitutional Amendment 31, otherwise known as the "Proposed Amendment to Add Section 7 to Article III of the Illinois Constitution," was referred to the ballot by the Illinois General Assembly. The proposed Amendment would provide a citizen-initiated path for holding a special election to recall a sitting Governor and elect a successor. It needs approval from three-fifths of those voting on the question *or* a majority of those voting in the election to take effect.

Problems with the Governor Recall Amendment in its current form include:

- *Targeted only at Governor.* Illinois residents would only be allowed to recall the governor; other statewide offices, state legislators, judges, and local officials would be exempt.
- *Requires political "permission slip."* Recall organizers would need approval from 20 State Representatives (10 from each party) and 10 State Senators (5 from each party) before recall petitions could be circulated.

- *High signature threshold.* To put a recall question before the voters, organizers would have 150 days to gather petition signatures equal to at least 15 percent of the total votes cast for Governor in the preceding election, with at least 100 signatures from each of at least 25 counties.
- *Only one recall opportunity allowed.* Once the State Board of Elections certifies a recall petition, no other recall petition may be initiated against the Governor during the remainder of his or her term, regardless of subsequent actions.

Our Solution

Approve a genuine recall process that would allow Illinois residents the opportunity to remove elected officials from office mid-term without having to get a "permission slip" from the political class.

Why This Works

Citizen-initiated recall is an effective "good governance" tool, but passing recall in the form outlined by the 2010 Illinois Governor Recall Amendment amounts to fake reform. Passing this fake reform now takes the pressure off the need to pass real changes in the future.

Genuine reform would include broadening the scope of elected officials who could be recalled by citizens, dropping the legislator "permission slip" requirement, lowering the signature threshold needed to qualify for the ballot, and removing the "one shot" clause.

Learn more at www.illinoispolicy.org.