

Proposed Charter Amendment:

REDUCE PETITION REQUIREMENTS FOR
CITIZEN-INITIATED BALLOT MEASURES

Proposed by Hon. Angela Hunt
Charter Review Commissioner, District 14

What Are Citizen-Initiated Ballot Measures?

Ballot propositions can be initiated in two ways:

- The Dallas City Council can place a proposition on the ballot

OR

- Registered voters in the City of Dallas* can do so via a petition process

*The Commission has voted to recommend this be changed to “Dallas resident”

Dallas' Petition Process Is Too Difficult

- Dallas requires signatures from 10% of all registered voters
- 700,000 registered voters in Dallas = 70,000 signatures
- Signatures must be collected within 60 days
- That's more than 1,000 valid signatures ***EVERY DAY!***

Easier to Put a Proposed Charter Amendment on the Ballot Than a City Law



PETITION FOR A CHARTER AMENDMENT

- Lesser of **20,000** or **5%** of registered voters
- **180 days** to collect signatures

PETITION FOR A CITY LAW

- **10%** of registered voters
- **60 days** to collect signatures

More Signatures Required for a Citizen-Initiated Ballot Measure Than Vote In Most Council Elections

CITY OF DALLAS ELECTION	Registered City of Dallas Voters	# of Voters	Voter Turnout
MAYORAL ELECTION 2023	690,635	51,858	8%
ALL CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2021	679,256	69,063	10%
MAYORAL ELECTION 2019	651,697	81,940	13%
ALL CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2017	630,536	47,901	8%

Dallas' Process Is More Difficult Than Other Major Cities in Texas

CITY	REQUIRED SIGNATURES	TIME LIMIT TO COLLECT	LAST SUCCESSFUL REFERENDUM PETITION DRIVE
AUSTIN	Lesser of 5% of registered voters or 20,000 signatures	No time limit	2022
SAN ANTONIO	10% of all registered voters (20,282 signatures)	180 days	2021
HOUSTON	10% of voters in last mayoral election (24,536 signatures)	30 days	2016
DALLAS	10% of all registered voters (70,000 signatures)	60 days	2007

Dallas' Petition Process Discourages Public Engagement and Encourages Bad Charter Amendments

- Nearly impossible for grassroots groups/volunteers to meet stringent petition referendum requirements
- Process favors well-funded groups that hire signature gatherers
- Groups opt for easier Charter petition process, even for legislation not appropriate for Charter

PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENT:

**5% signature requirement
120-day collection period**

- Collecting 35,000 signatures over four months is more attainable by grassroots groups
- Still stringent enough to ensure voters won't be inundated with ballot initiatives that lack broad public support