

THINK BEFORE YOU INK

The following has been published before in our newsletter, but it is a timely reminder.

LWVCO is encouraging the public to be cautious during this period of circulation of initiative petitions.

Voters will be asked to sign a variety of initiative petitions “just to get it on the ballot so people can vote on it”. The League is telling voters: “**Your signature is very valuable**, considering that far fewer signatures are required to qualify a petition for the ballot than voters to pass it on the ballot. **Only sign an initiative petition that you believe belongs on the ballot.**”

In 2008 the largest number of initiatives, 16, appeared on the ballot. This number could go even higher in 2010.

Consider six questions voters can ask themselves to help determine whether or not to sign an initiative petition:

Is it complex? Some issues can be decided by a simple **yes** or **no** vote. Complex issues may need to be thoroughly examined and debated in a legislative arena.

Is it confusing? Some initiatives are not well written or contain conflicts that may require court resolution or interpretation. This costs the taxpayers additional money to resolve these issues.

Does it belong in the Constitution? If an initiative amends the Constitution, consider whether it really belongs there. Is it a fundamental law that should be protected from change? Correcting a constitutional amendment requires another constitutional amendment – another vote of the people – and is cumbersome and costly.

How will it be funded? Is it an “unfunded mandate” that would require the Legislature to take funds from other essential programs? Consider the effect on the overall flexibility of a government budget with already limited revenue. An initiative should generally create its own revenue source, and not earmark, restrict or obligate a specific percentage of the General Fund revenues.

Who is behind it? You can find out who are the real sponsors and opponents of a petition drive. Contribution and expenditure reports are available through the Election Center at the Secretary of State’s Office at 303-894-2200 or at <http://www.sos.state.co.us>.

Before you sign, ask to see identification of the signature gatherer. All signature gatherers are now required to wear a badge that identifies them as a “volunteer circulator” or a “paid circulator”. If the signature gatherer is a paid circulator, his/her badge should also give the name and phone number of who hired him/her. If the petition signature gatherer is not wearing a badge, do not sign the petition.

The League of Women Voters of Colorado is a grassroots, nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government in order to build better communities statewide. More information can be found on the website at www.lwvcolorado.org

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