



**FAIRNESS
PROJECT**

Ballot Measure Rescue Campaign



Direct democracy is under attack.

Ballot measures, or ballot initiatives, are a crucial tool that let voters take action on issues like health care, livable wages, and reproductive freedom when polarized and gridlocked state legislatures fail their constituents.

Founded in 2016, the Fairness Project is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that has helped millions of voters in red, blue, and purple states to expand Medicaid, raise wages, guarantee paid leave, defend abortion rights and more – all through the use of ballot measures.

In response to voters taking matters into their own hands, some reactionary state legislators are actively working to make citizen-led initiatives prohibitively difficult. They want to increase petition collection requirements, limit what subjects can appear on the ballot, and even require a supermajority of voters to pass new laws.

In short, these politicians want to erode voters' power so they can consolidate their own. Their goal is to ensure that popular policies to improve the lives of working and marginalized people may never see the light of day.

As the nation's leader for progressive ballot measures, the Fairness Project is leading the charge to fight these attacks on our democracy. Since launching our Ballot Measure Rescue Campaign in 2021, we have organized more than \$5.6 million to defeat efforts to dismantle ballot measures wherever they have gone before voters.

After winning key campaigns in 2022, we're ready to take on the next fight. We're gearing up for another year of defending the democratic process and protecting voters' rights.

Our 2022 Victories



South Dakotans for Fair Elections

Knowing that Medicaid expansion would be on the ballot for voters in November 2022, extremist South Dakota legislators proposed Amendment C, which would have required state constitutional amendments to be approved by a supermajority of voters. This transparent attempt to entrench minority rule and block the will of the people was defeated by the Fairness Project and local partners – clearing the way forward for a Medicaid expansion victory in November.



Protect AR Constitution

Arkansas legislators placed Issue 2 before voters in November 2022 in an attempt to require a supermajority threshold for all ballot measures. Special interests spent millions to try to dismantle direct democracy, but the Fairness Project once again led a coalition to defeat Issue 2 and ensure that ballot measures continue to be a tool for Arkansas citizens to make their voices heard.



“The instinct from conservative lawmakers to make it harder for their voters to decide on the core issues that matter to them most is fundamentally an assault on voting rights. Those lawmakers know their ideological views are out of sync with their voters and they are trying to change the rules of the game.”

-Kelly Hall, Fairness Project Executive Director

Recent Coverage

POLITICO

Republicans look to restrict ballot measures following a string of progressive wins

THE HILL

Ballot measures saved abortion rights in the wake of Roe – now they're in danger

n p r

Ballot measures on weed and abortion won in 2022. Now they're fueling a backlash

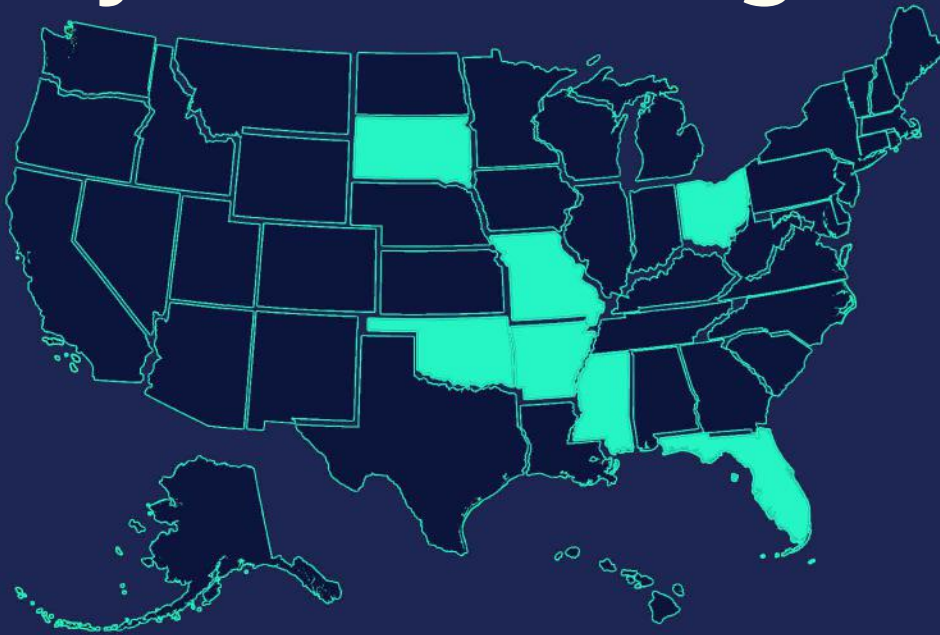
NBC

After string of abortion-rights wins, conservatives look to curtail the ballot measure process

The Guardian

How Republicans are trying to block voters from having a say on abortion

Key 2023 Battlegrounds



The Fairness Project is actively tracking attacks on the ballot measure process that have been filed in state legislatures for the 2023 session. Follow our work for updates on new developments and ways to fight back.

OHIO

Republicans Secretary of State Frank LaRose and Rep. Brian Stewart announced in November that a top legislative priority in 2023 will be to enact a supermajority threshold for constitutional amendments on the ballot. Republican legislators are now attempting to pass HJR1, which would enact a 60% requirement for passing ballot measures that amend the constitution. It would also create barriers to getting measures on the ballot by requiring signatures from all 88 counties.

MISSOURI

Legislators in Missouri have filed a dozen bills to make the ballot measure process harder. Their proposals include raising the number of signatures required to qualify a measure, including requiring a percentage come from all six congressional districts; requiring a supermajority of 60% or even 67% for ballot measures to pass; and requiring a ballot measure be approved by a majority of registered voters instead of a majority of the last gubernatorial election turnout.

OKLAHOMA

Efforts by Oklahoma legislators to make ballot measures more difficult have failed, but Republicans have said they are still aiming to raise the threshold for state constitutional amendments from 50% to 55%. Another recent bill would restrict ballot measures to elections in odd numbered years, which have lower turnout. Oklahoma politicians have also succeeded in making the signature verification process longer and more tedious.

FLORIDA

Florida is one of two states that already requires a 60% threshold for ballot measures to pass. State lawmakers have proposed entrenching minority rule even further by introducing a bill that would mandate a 67%, or two-thirds, approval by voters for ballot measures to pass.

MISSISSIPPI

In 2022, the Mississippi Supreme Court overturned the state's ballot measure process entirely. Working to reinstate the ballot measure process in Mississippi will also be a critical fight for advocates of direct democracy in 2023.

SOUTH DAKOTA

Although they have failed in the past, legislators in South Dakota have shown signs that they intend to keep pushing to make direct democracy harder by raising the threshold for ballot measures to pass by 60%.



Get in touch with us.

Ballot measure experts at the Fairness Project are available to speak on and off the record, in print, audio, and video formats, about ballot measure campaigns. We are also open to sharing commentary and analysis on political news and developments relating to ballot measures and direct democracy.

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