

**PROTECTING UTAHNS RIGHT TO SEMI-DIRECT DEMOCRACY
THROUGH INITIATIVES AND POPULAR REFERENDA**

WHEREAS, Three of the Purposes of PTA are: to promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, places of worship, and throughout the community; to advocate for laws that further the education, physical and mental health, welfare, and safety of children and youth; and, to engage the public in united efforts to secure the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being of all children and youth¹; and,

WHEREAS, To allow citizens to act as a check against the actions of a legislative body, many states have provided for a system of direct democracy in the form of the citizen-initiated referendum (also called an *initiative*) and popular referendum (collectively called “ballot measures”)^{2,3}; and,

WHEREAS, A citizen-initiated referenda empowers members of the general public to propose, by petition, specific statutory measures to the government without involving the legislature or the governor, by gathering a minimum percentage of registered voters’ signatures to qualify a proposition on a statewide general election ballot, to be approved by a majority of those voting^{3,4,5,6}; and,

WHEREAS, A popular referendum is a process in which voters can veto a law recently passed by the legislature and signed by the governor by gathering a minimum percentage of registered voters’ signatures to have the law placed on a statewide general election ballot for the voters to decide whether to uphold or repeal the law^{3,4,5,6}; and,

WHEREAS, Utah became the second state in the nation to institute both the initiative and popular referendum in 1900, as provided by the Utah Constitution^{5,7,8}; and,

WHEREAS, The Utah Legislature has, by statute, made it very difficult and expensive for citizens to bring an initiative or referendum to the People for consideration because of stringent requirements for signature gathering^{9,10}; therefore be it

Resolved, That Utah PTA and its constituent bodies support the right of the people to participate in direct democracy through initiatives and referenda and oppose any legislation that weakens their ability to do so.

Documentation:
[1Purposes of the PTA](#)

²O’Connor, Karen and Sabato, Larry J. (2005). *American Government: Continuity and Change*. New York: Pearson Longman Education, Inc.

³ Smith, Graham (2009). *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation*

(Theories of Institutional Design). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 112

⁴Dresang, Dennis L. and Gosling, James J. (2006). *Politics and Policy in American States and Communities*. New York: Pearson Longman Education, Inc.

⁵Ballotpedia. “Initiative and Referendum”. https://ballotpedia.org/Initiative_and_referendum. (19 November 2019)

⁶Initiative and Referendum Institute at the University of Southern California. “What are ballot proposals, initiatives, and referendums?”
<https://web.archive.org/web/20100725175114/http://www.iandrinstitute.org/Quick%20Fact%20-%20What%20is%20I%20R.htm>. (19 November 2019).

⁷*The Book of States, 2000-2001*. (2000). Lexington, Ky.: Council of State Governments.

⁸Utah Constitution. Article VI, Section 1. “Power vested in Senate, House, and People”.
https://le.utah.gov/xcode/ArticleVI/Article_VI_Section_1.html. (19 November 2019).

⁹Utah Code. Title 20A, Chapter 7. “Issues submitted to the voters”.
https://le.utah.gov/xcode/Title20A/Chapter7/20A-7.html?v=C20A-7_1800010118000101. (19 November 2019)

¹⁰Ballotpedia. “Laws governing the initiative process in Utah”.
https://ballotpedia.org/Laws_governing_the_initiative_process_in_Utah. (19 November 2019).