

# AMERICAN STRATEGIES

Date: April 28, 2022

To: Interested Parties

From: Joe Goode, CEO American Strategies

**Re: New Poll Shows Voter Support for Current Initiative Process in Missouri**

Missouri voters overwhelmingly believe that the current process for getting an initiative or constitutional amendment on the state ballot works fine and majorities reject any proposals for change, according to a new poll released today by American Strategies, a national polling firm.<sup>1</sup> Both Republicans and Democrats are supportive of the status quo – a rare area of agreement in today’s partisan environment.

After hearing a short description of the ballot initiative qualification process, **nearly three-quarters – 72 percent – felt that the current process for getting something on the ballot seemed about right.** Just nine percent said it was too easy, while 15 percent felt it was too hard. Among Republicans, 73 percent said the current process seemed about right. A nearly identical 72 percent of Democrats agreed.

Most voters (86 percent) say that they usually vote on all measures that they see on the ballot, another indication of support for the citizen initiative process. Just two percent tend to skip the ballot measures.

Majorities reject each of the proposed changes to the ballot qualification and approval process that are currently under consideration at the state legislature:

- 58 percent oppose a proposal that would require state legislative approval of a citizen initiative before it could be placed on the ballot; only 39 percent are in favor.
- 54 percent oppose increasing the number of votes needed for passage from a simple majority to a two-thirds majority with just 42 percent in favor.
- 53 percent oppose increasing the number of petition signatures needed to qualify for the ballot in each of the state’s eight congressional districts; only 41 percent are in favor of that change.

After registering their opinions on the current process and the proposed changes, poll respondents heard messages from opponents of the reforms. *After messaging, almost half – 45 percent - were less likely to vote for a state legislator who voted to make it harder for citizens to put petition initiatives on the ballot.* Only 18 percent were more likely to vote for such a legislator while 37 percent said the issue would not make a difference to how they voted.

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<sup>1</sup> Details about the poll are located on page 2 of this memo. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.4%.

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Seven-in-ten (71 percent) wanted to leave the ballot initiative and constitutional amendment process as it is; only 25 percent felt that it should be harder to get something on the ballot.

The following three messages resonated the most:

- The current process allows voters to directly participate in their democracy. It keeps power with the people, instead of politicians. (73 percent very or somewhat convincing)
- These changes would make it almost impossible for citizens to collect enough signatures to get on the ballot or enough votes to win on Election Day. We need to keep the process as it is so that citizens have a chance to make real reforms. (68 percent very or somewhat convincing)
- Special interest groups dominate the legislative process in Missouri and stop most reforms while redirecting tax dollars to pet projects. We need to keep the citizen initiative process as it is to help put a stop to special interest groups. (66 percent very or somewhat convincing)

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American Strategies designed and administered this multimodal survey conducted by professional interviewers and via Qualtrics. The survey reached 974 adults (850 weighted), age 18 or older, who indicated they are registered to vote in Missouri and are almost certain to vote, or probably will vote in the November 2022 election. The survey was conducted from April 20-26, 2022.

Forty-seven percent of respondents were reached on wireless phones, four percent on VOIP phones, and nineteen percent on landlines. Twenty-nine percent of respondents were reached online. Quotas were assigned to reflect the demographic distribution of likely Missouri November 2022 voters, and the data were weighted to ensure an accurate reflection of the population. The sample was drawn from a third party vendor file. The overall margin of error is +/- 3.4%. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies. Percentage totals may not add up precisely due to rounding.