

Collecting Signatures for Petition Initiatives

A petition initiative is a signature drive of only voters to put a law on the ballot for voters to decide. Our petitions current in 2023 are:

Rad[iation]Limits at Last Tree Laws | Fair Legislature at LastTreeLaws.com

Where and how can signatures be collected?

All signature collection must be polite, without harassment or disruption. Unless a table is permitted by relevant authorities, signature collection means standing or walking with a clipboard. Documents on legality are helpful as proof of the right to petition, if asked, and can be printed online here: <https://lasttreelaws.com/signature-spots/>

- **Public sidewalks**
 - The city or town may not ban signature collection on public sidewalks or require a permit.
- **Parks and similar open public spaces**
 - You can petition in any public area of the park and you do not need a permit when it is open – restrictions are allowed only in areas set aside for private functions.
- **Public buildings, town meetings**
 - Signatures can be solicited in areas open to everyone like hallways, but not office and must not interfere with business. Petitions cannot be left unattended in public buildings – this is illegal use of public resources for political advocacy.
- **During festivals**
 - You may seek petition signatures from people coming or leaving by standing on public sidewalks, on streets closed to traffic and in public parks outside the area for the public festival. If other petitioners are allowed inside, then you can as well.
- **Libraries**
 - In libraries, signature solicitation is permitted *provided* there is no interference with patrons, staff, or normal library operations. Petitions may not be left in a library, as this is illegal use of public resources for campaigning.
- **Door-to-door in most cases**
 - Allowed as long as money is not being solicited & the area does not have a 'no soliciting' sign or is a private gated community.
- **Your home and yard**
 - Throw a signing party! Mention the petition to your friends, so that they can sign your petition or get a petition of their own. Use your yard if on the route of a parade or near a polling location for voters.
- **Public common areas of shopping centers *with more than 1 business***
 - These may require advance scheduling, identification of parties, and a specific area for solicitation of signatures.
 - A shopping center refers to a business *with more than one business inside*, such as a mall or a grocery store with another business inside like a bank.
 - Stop & Shop and many grocery stores which are not shopping centers usually allow gathering signatures with advance scheduling, and may have table and chairs or allow you to bring your own.

Tips for Collecting Signatures

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Connecting

- **Smile!**
- So no one thinks you are asking for money, you can say, **'I just need a signature!'**
- Ask: **'Are you a Mass. Voter?'**
- If yes, **'Would you like to sign a petition initiative?'**
- If asked, explain with something quick to start, like:
 - I have 3 petitions....
 - *Reduce cellphone radiation*
 - *Privacy*
 - *Fair legislature*
- If needed, give details quickly, like:
 - *'France told Apple to reduce power on their iPhone, and Apple complied. France and Cyprus both hard-wired schools to protect kids. This start the same here.'*
 - You can point to a handout, to save your voice.
- With people *afraid* to sign, share a small handout for info and say: **'You can sign to get it on the ballot & decide how to vote later.'**
- BEFORE signing, say: **'Don't cross out or line out mistakes!'**
- While signing, ask; **'Would you like to volunteer here or online?'**
- Connect & build your own network in town to work together on these issues.
- Share printable handouts with everyone for further information including the website and contact information for increased support.

Materials Set-Up

Clipboard:

- Insert your petitions to show signature slots – insert a lot
- **On top of petitions**, place a big sheet with key signing instructions highlighted, like: don't cross or x out anything!
- **On top of instructions**, place a quarter size or smaller sheets with petition info, like a short summary to show for petitions with too much to read.
- **On top**, if collecting for more than one petition type, use a small sheet on top to list the petition topics and letters, e.g. S- radiation limits, I – fair legislature.
- 2+ clipboards can be handy
- Cardboard and/or a big plastic bag can be laid on top of sheets or around the board to prevent damage.
- Use the back of the clipboard for a useful 8' x 11' handout, like a poster or explanation sheet.

Bags

- Choose 1 or 2 bags with compartments for handouts, pens, snacks, tape, scissors.
- Add 1 or 2 manila files for handouts and signs – check printables at lasttreelaws.com.

Posters

- Use the back of your clipboard.
- A big sign can be helpful if at a table.
- A sign can even just say: **'Sign a Mass. Initiative Petition!'**