



# Ballot Initiative STRATEGY CENTER

## Ballot Bulletin

September 2009

With just weeks to go before the 2009 election, the ballot measure world is heating up with battles on both sides of the country to counteract the right-wing's abuse of the direct democracy system. In Maine and Washington, marriage equality advocates are being challenged by out of touch conservatives, and the period leading up to the election promises some hard fought battles still in store.

In Maine, [opponents of marriage equality](#) have submitted signatures to the Secretary of State's office to place a citizen's veto on the fall ballot of the recently passed marriage equality law, despite the law being passed by the legislature and signed by the governor. The law, signed into law by Governor Baldacci on May 6, was scheduled to take effect in September. In order to support and protect marriage for all Maine families, [Maine Freedom to Marry](#) has organized a broad based campaign and recently began [running statewide ads](#) in support of the marriage equality law. To date, five states have approved marriage equality through either the legislature or the courts, and so the consequence of this election on other states is monumental.

The [state of Washington](#) is also involved in a hotly contested ballot initiative showdown. Referendum 71, which would repeal the domestic partnership bill recently passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor, threatens to be on November's ballot. News reports confirm that supporters of the R-71 campaign (Protect Marriage Washington) have [used deceptive signature petitions](#) in order to trick people into signing their petitions, and signature gatherers for R-71 have [been caught on video](#) using misleading tactics, lying to citizens about the new domestic partnership law.

August saw R-71 embroiled in a very meticulous signature verification process, as initiative backers turned in barely enough signatures to qualify putting the measure on the ballot. Yesterday, R-71 was certified for the November ballot with a very slim signature margin. An initial legal challenge to its validity was rejected by King County Superior Court, but ongoing legal challenges are likely and could be the deciding factor as to whether or not R-71 makes the ballot.

## Oregon Trail...of Fraud

In Oregon, the integrity of the ballot is under threat. Signature gatherers with [criminal convictions including for forgery, theft, stalking, or sex offenses](#) are working for a right-wing backed ballot initiative group to repeal taxes on corporations and wealthy individuals. Background checks have confirmed at least 82 arrests and 37 criminal convictions associated with this campaign's signature gatherers. The campaign is being led by [Bill Sizemore](#) pals [Russ Walker](#) and [Kevin Mannix](#).

## Reports from Project New West

At the [2009 Summit](#), BISC Executive Director Kristina Wilfore recommended that progressives focus on "ballot integrity." She warned them to watch out for ballot fraud and groups that try to skirt the process with invalid signatures and misleading language.

## In the News

In 2006, AZ State Rep. Kyrsten Sinema led the only successful campaign to defeat a same-sex marriage ban. On [September 8](#), she discusses her [new book](#) and ways to assemble coalitions for progressive causes.