



# Ballot Initiative STRATEGY CENTER

## Ballot Initiative Fraud Alert

August 2009

People need to be assured that ballot measures that seek to amend state statutes and constitutions are free of any abuse, fraud, and deception.

In Oregon and Washington, the integrity of the ballot is under threat by ballot measure campaigns that are abusing the direct democracy process.

### Oregon

More than half of the signature gatherers working for a right-wing backed ballot initiative group to repeal taxes on corporations and wealthy individuals have [criminal convictions including for forgery, theft, stalking, or sex offenses](#).

[News reports have revealed](#) that "two of the petitioners had been convicted of sex crimes, including one convicted of the sex abuse of his daughter in 1990."

In total, background checks confirm at least 82 arrests and 37 criminal convictions associated with the right-wing campaign's signature gatherers.

The [petition drive is being led by Russ Walker and Kevin Mannix](#), who both have a cozy history with "racketeer" [Bill Sizemore](#).

### Washington

In Washington, signature gatherers for Referendum 71, which would repeal the domestic partnership bill recently passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor, have been [caught on video using misleading tactics](#), lying to citizens about the new "everything but marriage" law and their attempts to repeal it.

News reports confirm that supporters of the Referendum 71 campaign (Protect Marriage Washington) have also [used deceptive signature petitions](#) in order to trick people into signing

their petitions.

The Referendum 71 campaign has created signature petitions that read:

- "The legislature just passed a law that effectively makes same sex marriages legal. By signing R-71 we can reverse that decision and protect marriage as between one man and one woman."
- "If same-sex marriage becomes law, public schools K-12 will be forced to teach that same-sex marriage and homosexuality are normal...even over the objections of parents. Sign R-71 to protect children."

Both statements are false.

The state Attorney General's office wrote the ballot title to accurately describe what the domestic partnership bill--which R-71 attempts to repeal--actually does. The ballot summary accurately reflects the bill and says, "Registered domestic partnerships are not marriages, and marriage is prohibited except between one man and one woman."

The author of the domestic partnership bill in the state house, state Representative Jamie Pedersen, has said, "There is nothing in the bill that forces schools to teach homosexuality or that same-sex marriage is normal." And state Senator Ed Murray, the bill's prime sponsor, adds: "There is nothing in the bill that requires anyone to teach anything."

### **A Broken System in Need of Solutions**

We strongly believe that all ballot measure campaigns--whether sponsored by conservative or progressive organizations, or petitioned through paid or volunteer signature gathering--should be required to play by the rules.

Over the last three election cycles, there has been a dramatic jump in the use of signature fraud all across the country to qualify ballot initiatives. Only by implementing solutions to the problems that exist will states be able to provide people with a ballot measure process that works for voters instead of against them.

For more information on the ballot initiative abuse, fraud, and deception that is plaguing the direct democracy system and some common sense solutions to fix it, go to [www.stopballotfraud.org](http://www.stopballotfraud.org).