



Written by [Peter Rykowski](#) on November 4, 2024

Radical State Ballot Measures Highlight Dangers of Democracy

In tomorrow's elections, Americans are largely fixated on the races for president and, to a lesser extent, Congress. However, consequential elections will also be held at the state level — including ballot measures seeking to impose radical, left-wing policies. These ballot measures highlight the dangers of democracy, which the Founding Fathers warned against, and the importance of maintaining a republican form of government.

Tuesday's Ballot Measures

On Tuesday, Americans will decide on [147 ballot measures](#) in 41 states, including 57 citizen-initiated measures that bypassed the regular legislative process. They cover a wide range of topics, and many seek to implement radical policies that defy common sense.

For example, [10 states](#) will vote on ballot measures to enshrine abortion in their constitutions. Although any proposal to legalize ending the lives of preborn babies is morally reprehensible, some of these ballot measures go further. For example, [Colorado Amendment 79](#) would also [allow](#) taxpayer dollars to fund abortions, while [New York Proposal 1](#) would [protect](#) “gender identity” and “gender expression,” in addition to abortion.

Multiple radical election-related referendums will also appear on state ballots. For example, voters in [six states](#) plus the District of Columbia will decide on ballot measures seeking to either implement or advance ranked-choice voting (RCV), a complicated system that, as *The New American* [previously reported](#), “threatens election integrity and undermines the electorate’s ability to choose the best candidate in elections.” Additionally, the Heritage Foundation has [described](#) RCV as “really a scheme to disconnect elections from issues and allow candidates with marginal support from voters to win elections.”

Other ballot measures seeking to impose extreme policies include [California Proposition 32](#), to increase the state minimum wage to an [economically harmful](#) \$18 an hour; [Colorado Proposition KK](#), to levy a constitutionally suspect 6.5-percent tax on firearms and ammunition; and [Ohio Issue 1](#), to create a technocratic independent redistricting commission, [eroding](#) representative government. Although other ballot measures would implement conservative policies — for example, [eight states](#) will vote on codifying noncitizen voting bans in their constitutions, and North Dakota will consider [significantly curtailing](#) property taxes — this process is used mostly to enact radical, left-leaning policies.



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Is the Ballot-measure Process Constitutional?

Defenders of the ballot-measure process argue that it “strengthens democracy.” However, the United States [is not](#) — and was never intended to be — a democracy. Instead, it is a [constitutional republic](#) — a government that protects [God-given rights](#) regardless of the whims of the majority. In fact, [Article IV, Section 4](#) of the U.S. Constitution requires states to have “a Republican Form of Government.”

The Founding Fathers despised democracy, based on their understanding of history and human nature, and contrasted it with the American form of government. For example, in [The Federalist, No. 10](#), James Madison asserted that “Democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives as they have been violent in their deaths.” In an [1814 letter](#) to John Taylor, John Adams wrote that “democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet, that did not commit suicide.”

Elbridge Gerry, speaking at the 1787 Constitutional Convention, [argued](#) that “the evils we experience flow from the excess of democracy.” And Alexander Hamilton, speaking at the 1788 New York Ratifying Convention, [argued](#) that “the ancient democracies, in which the people themselves deliberated, never possessed one feature of good government. Their very character was tyranny; their figure deformity.” Multiple other examples could be cited.

The Founders’ wariness of democracy is precisely why they designed a government with [robust checks and balances](#) — including a bicameral Congress, the Electoral College, and divided sovereignty between the states and the federal government. This system has been essential to protecting Americans’ God-given freedoms from government infringement.

Bypassing State Legislatures

During the first decades following the Constitution’s ratification, the states largely followed the model that the Founding Fathers established. However, beginning in the mid-to-late 19th century, states increasingly diverged from this framework. The statewide ballot-measure process itself [began in 1898](#), when South Dakota became the first state to adopt it.

In the [26 states](#) that currently have a citizen-initiated ballot-measure process, individuals and interest groups can bypass state legislators — the people’s elected representatives — to ram through radical policies without the same level of scrutiny that the legislative process guarantees.

Tomorrow, Americans will make important decisions on which candidates to elect, and whether to accept or reject their states’ ballot measures. However, if our country is to remain free, we must roll back its slide toward democracy and away from constitutional republicanism. A great way to begin is by scrapping the state ballot-measure process and the many radical referendums that come with it.

To learn more about how the American form of government differs from democracy, watch the 30-minute video [Overview of America](#). To learn more about the problems of the state ballot-measure process, read the article [“Restore State Government,”](#) published in the October 14, 2024 issue of The New American.



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