



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 24, 2013

Total Recall: Why Recall Elections Are a Must

Should recall elections be reserved only for politicians who break the law? Columnist Rick Moran thinks so. Opining on an impending recall election in Colorado, he [writes](#):



The recall device should be reserved for politicians who either break the law or are corrupt in some other way. It shouldn't be employed because 10,000 people disagree with a particular vote taken on an issue.

Recall elections are expensive and turnout is usually about 1 in 5 eligible voters. It just isn't worth it when the only issue is that some constituents disagree with the way a legislator voted.

Mr. Moran is being consistent. He made this argument after the recall designed to oust Republican legislators in Wisconsin, and now he applies it to two Democrat Colorado state senators — John Morse and Angela Giron — who have been targeted by the NRA after voting for an anti-Second Amendment bill. That's fair enough; however, his thesis overlooks some important points.

Mr. Moran says that a recall is “unnecessary because the legislators stand for re-election every two years, at which point voters can punish the politicians for their votes.” The problem with this is that voters have very, very short memories. Remember John McCain in 2007? After pushing his amnesty bill, his approval rating had plummeted among Republicans and his presidential campaign was in tatters; he seemed like a dead man walking. Yet in 2008 he became the GOP nominee.

Here's a fact: Politicians know that the bulk of voters don't remember from one year to the next — and they bank on it. They know they can get away with a lot — pushing bad policy in deference to big donors and special interest groups, who will remember failure to do their bidding — as long as they *don't do it too close to re-election time*. Because at that point, only the relatively few high-information voters *will* remember the betrayal. The solution to this lack of voter recall is the recall election.

In addition, low voter turnout isn't a liability.

It's a strength.

Any politics wonk knows that low turnout favors Republicans. But a better way to put it is that it favors good government. The less an election inspires interest, [the more only the interested cast ballots](#). And interest in something is a prerequisite for competence. Recall elections help remove the idiot vote from the equation.

If politicians knew that breaking an election promise or stabbing good Americans in the back would result in an immediate recall effort, they'd be more likely to mind their p's and q's.

Electoral justice delayed is too often electoral justice denied.

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