

Recall Process for Mayors in the Fight Against Homeless Encampments and Community Conditions

Union of Saints

Understanding the Recall Process

What Is a Recall

A recall is a legal process that allows voters to petition for a special election to determine whether an elected official should remain in office before the end of their term.

Recalls are a form of direct community participation that may be available under state constitutions, statutes, local charters, or municipal codes.

Community Concerns and Public Accountability

In many communities, residents express concerns regarding homeless encampments, public safety, sanitation, environmental conditions, infrastructure maintenance, and the use of public resources. Long term encampments are a form of modern ghettoing that concentrates poverty, instability, and social distress into specific geographic areas. They are also evidence of greater challenges involving housing, mental health, addiction, economic hardship, and public policy.

Elected officials are often expected to address these issues through lawful, humane, and effective governance. **Local leadership may fail** to adequately respond to important community concerns like homeless encampments, in this case, civil remedies may be available, including the **recall process** where permitted by law.

Purpose of a Recall

The recall process provides citizens with a mechanism to seek the removal of an elected official before the next regularly scheduled election.

The availability of recall procedures varies by jurisdiction, and not all elected offices are subject to recall.

Signature Requirements

Most recall processes require petition organizers to collect a minimum number of signatures from qualified voters. Example, 25,000 votes.

The required number of signatures is typically based on a percentage of registered voters or a percentage of votes cast in a previous election.

Signature requirements vary significantly depending on the state, county, city, or district involved.

Petition Process

Recall efforts generally begin with the filing of required paperwork with the appropriate election authority.

Once approved, petition organizers are provided a period of time during which signatures may be collected.

Completed petitions are then submitted for review and verification.

Verification of Signatures

Election officials review submitted signatures to determine whether they meet legal requirements and whether the required number of valid signatures has been obtained.

Only verified signatures are counted toward the total required for a recall election.

Recall Election

If a petition is certified as sufficient, a recall election may be scheduled in accordance with applicable law.

Voters are then given the opportunity to decide whether the official should remain in office.

Depending on the jurisdiction, the election may also include procedures for selecting a replacement official.

Eligibility and Timing Requirements

Many jurisdictions require an elected official to serve a minimum amount of time before becoming subject to recall.

Some jurisdictions also restrict how frequently recall petitions may be filed.

Specific deadlines and procedures vary by location.

Sources of Authority

Recall procedures may be established through:

- State constitutions
- State statutes
- County charters
- Municipal charters
- Local election codes
- Administrative regulations

Educational Note

This document is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

Recall laws, procedures, deadlines, and requirements vary by jurisdiction and may change over time. Individuals seeking information regarding a specific recall process should consult the applicable election authority, governing charter, and current state and local laws.

The purpose of community engagement is to encourage lawful participation in public affairs and to promote accountability, transparency, public safety, and the well being of communities through established democratic processes.

Union of Saints Position

The Union of Saints supports the lawful use of recall procedures in jurisdictions where elected officials have failed to adequately address persistent homeless encampments, public safety concerns, sanitation issues, environmental degradation, and related community impacts.

We believe that citizens have both the right and the responsibility to participate in democratic processes when they believe their communities are being neglected or harmed.

Recalls are one of several lawful community mechanisms available to voters for promoting accountability, transparency, and responsive governance.

The Union of Saints encourages all community engagement to remain peaceful, lawful, respectful, evidence based, and focused on practical solutions that protect both vulnerable individuals and the greater community.

Our position is that communities should not be forced to accept long term conditions that create public health risks, safety concerns, environmental damage, or the concentration of human suffering. Local governments have a responsibility to pursue effective solutions that restore public spaces while also respecting the dignity and humanity of all persons involved.

Where legal recall procedures exist, citizens may choose to utilize those processes when they believe elected leadership has failed to meet its obligations to the community.