

The Committee felt that in view of the increasing urbanization of our population it was certainly proper to increase the figure from our present one, but I do not think that you should make it an impossibility.

The question of tying the time factor to the number of signatures, I would like to say, is quite unfair. Nobody who has ever collected signatures on petitions—and I have—is ever going to say that the record on the first day is one that you can maintain for ninety days. Your record in the first month bears no relationship to what you can expect to get in the second month, and I suspect that what you get in the third month is much less than what you get in the second month, so that the increase of thirty days again I think is an idle gesture.

On the basis of the time, I would grant that, again, the minority intends its amendment to make it more difficult to suspend; nobody can question that. But I think what it does is make it virtually impossible to suspend. and I feel that suspendability is an important part of the referendum procedure. Certainly it must be controlled, but certainly it should not be made an impossibility.

THE CHAIRMAN: For what purpose does Delegate Bennett rise?

DELEGATE BENNETT: I rise to speak in favor of the Chabot amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN. All right.

The delegate may proceed.

DELEGATE SCHLOEDER: Mr. Chairman, I wonder, for procedure, so this is not charged on the body's time I will be very happy to yield two minutes or three minutes to Delegate Bennett.

THE CHAIRMAN: The tape is interrupting procedures. Nobody has any time right at the moment. We have not utilized all of the controlled time.

Does Delegate Chabot wish to yield to anyone? I would also have to accord Delegate Schloeder's use of controlled time, too, so that we have not utilized all of the controlled time yet.

Does Delegate Schloeder wish to yield any of his time?

DELEGATE SCHLOEDER: Yes. I would be happy at this time to yield two minutes to Delegate Bennett.

DELEGATE BENNETT: Mr. Chairman, members of the Convention:

I am afraid that the Convention is getting confused over figures and they have not gotten down to the nitty-gritty part of this problem.

What Mr. Chabot's amendment does in essence is increase the number of voters that are necessary to petition a bill to referendum, thus making it more difficult.

Now, every study that has so far been made of a referendum procedure shows that it facilitates government by well financed, organized minorities; that it is clear that in our own State, and I think elsewhere in the union, that the percentage of voters who will vote on referendum proposals is much less than those who vote for the candidates in the elections. So that a well organized propaganda group can frustrate the work of the legislature.

Moreover, seldom are voters able to understand the language that is on the ballot, and they must, therefore—and usually do—vote blindly.

Another objection to it is that again it lengthens the ballot, already too long; and so I ask the members of the Convention to support Mr. Chabot's amendment for the fundamental purpose that it is going to strengthen our legislature. It is going to prevent well organized minorities, well financed minorities, from frustrating this legislature we have tried so hard to up-build.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Koss, do you wish to yield any of your time?

DELEGATE KOSS: I yield three minutes to Delegate Pascal.

DELEGATE PASCAL: Fellow delegates, first of all, let me state that the majority of the Committee Report did not want referendum to be a promiscuous device of special interest groups. We studied the proposal that is now before you, this amendment, and we rejected it for the following reasons: first, no state in the union has the criteria of registered or qualified voters as a base for petition, and the reason they do not have that particular base is its unreliability. If we can take an example from the State of Maryland: in Anne Arundel County in 1965 we had a reregistration that took twelve months. We started off with 84,000 voters, and wound up with 74,000 when we counted them again; in Baltimore City in the last canvass, after the count was taken they came up with 25,000 fewer voters; in Montgomery County we are supposed to have