

2.A Overview for Getting a Referendum Passed

This section provides a good overview of processes and information needed to get a referendum passed in your city or village.

The subsections included are:

- A. Summary of strategy and approaches for getting resolutions
- B. Preparation for the Challenge
- C. Building Relationships
- D. Developing a Plan
- E. Preparing Tools and Materials

This section does not discuss getting a resolution passed in towns or counties. These typically require a different process and are discussed in a separate *Town and County Handbook*.

A. Summary of strategy and approaches for getting resolutions

- 1) Strategy – First we seek to pass referenda in several cities and villages in your county through petitioning. This both educates voters and demonstrates support to surrounding communities and higher levels of government. The petition campaign needs to be timed before the target election. After getting city and village resolutions passed, we envision getting nearby town resolutions passed – which take markedly less work. We prefer requesting a resolution from the County Board *only after* having demonstrated local support by at least five city, village and town resolutions within the county.
- 2) Approaches
 - a. Cities and Villages – The WI Statutes allow citizens to force a referendum in a city or village. If a group in your municipality gets 15% of the number of persons who voted in the last governor’s race to sign a petition for the referendum, the city or village must put the referendum on the ballot in the next election or pass the resolution directly. And, the municipality must use the exact language signed for by the citizens.
 - b. Cities and Villages (Alternative) – The city or village can pass a resolution without a petition drive if they agree with the request of the group. HOWEVER, UnitedToAmend prefers they not do it this way. One of the major goals of UnitedToAmend is to build a movement – starting with getting resolutions. Doing it by putting a referendum on the ballot both builds the very necessary movement and helps us educate voters, starting *now*.
 - c. Towns and Counties – The WI state constitution does not require towns and counties to respond to citizen petitions. The approaches for getting resolutions passed in towns and counties are discussed in the *Town and County Resolution Handbook*.
- 3) Post Resolution Phase – When a group feels it has enough resolutions in nearby municipalities and county, we hope they will continue to work together towards the long term goals: helping other communities, and counties, get resolutions passed. We also hope the group will help us build the movement by getting faith communities, small businesses, and other segments of society to pass resolutions – which helps build the movement among other Wisconsin citizens. And eventually, we will need citizens in every community who worked on resolution campaigns to help us lobby both our state and our federal representatives to support OUR amendment. First at the state level, lobbying will be needed to convince our representatives to conduct a statewide referendum for the resolution we passed in the many communities. When the statewide ballot results show significant support for the amendment, we will then lobby our legislators to call for OUR amendment. Then later we will lobby our federal representatives to ensure that our, *We The People*, amendment is passed – not a useless faux version.

B. Preparation for the Challenge

- 1) The first step is for a group of persons who are interested in getting involved in the movement to Reform our Republic to decide they want to get a resolution passed in their community. Wisconsin UnitedToAmend suggests that to ensure success of this effort there be 2 to 4 persons who are committed to this success – meaning they are ready to do the preparation work that is required, and the management work during the effort. When there are enough committed people in your group you are ready to go. This heaviest lifting part takes about two months of disciplined effort
- 2) With a core of 2 to 4 committed persons, the group should seek to involve more volunteers who will help with specific tasks such as writing Letters to the Editor, tabling at events, working the farmers markets; and going door-to-door and helping with other strategies for getting signatures. WIUTA often does what we call our Education presentation to a larger group of citizens who are invited to a local group venue to learn about the effort – the intent being to enlist others in the community to help. In communities that were not properly prepared with volunteers and a clear plan, the resolution signature collections have been difficult.
- 3) When the core group is confident that they have enough volunteers to get the job done, they typically will next have a meeting geared to learning how to do a referendum – understanding the political rules and limitations as well as how to work with the city/village contacts to build relationships. WIUTA can help with that *task planning* meeting – at this point we will offer an Advisor to help through to election day and after.
- 4) After the *task planning* meeting the group will implement the activities needed to get the referendum on the ballot. The Advisor might join the group by *Skype* or *Google Hangouts* or just be available to be called during the meeting to help get some questions answered immediately. The group leaders should not be shy to contact other members of WIUTA directly for specific direct support. For example: Jim Crist is our tech guru. A member of your group might contact him for a list of “supporters” in the statewide database whom the group might want to call to solicit help. Or your group might ask the Advisor to contact Jim or others for help – we are flexible, available, and ready to support through whatever channel is most efficient and effective for you. This attitude is an imperative if we are to be able to withstand the future attacks of the Corrupt Two-Party Power System that dominates our politics, government and society.

C. Building Relationships

- 1) Because we are building a movement, WIUTA prefers to build long-term relationships with our municipal representatives. We also prefer to build trust with the board/council members by letting them know up front what we are about, what we are seeking to do, and how and why we need local government to protect the community from current and future challenges by higher levels of government. Most municipal representatives are close enough to the community to understand the need for this movement. And they can see how their authority is undermined by state and federal power-grabbing. Treat them with respect and you have long-term allies.
- 2) Any member of the local group that knows and has a relationship with the city or village clerk should approach them and explain what the purpose of the group is – emphasizing that this is a group of citizens working outside of any party or any partisan group. This is more believable if you can enlist persons to the group who typically are aligned with either party – but finding this person might take extra work up front.
- 3) One of the first things that helps build a relationship with the clerk is to ask her/him for the number of persons who voted in the last governor's race. Explaining to them that we are aware that we need to get petition signatures from 15% of this figure. WIUTA will provide you with that number from government data, but asking the clerk for her/his number shows respect – compared to presuming you need to tell them the number. Also, the clerk might give you a number that is different from our estimate. We recommend that you do not mention the difference. Thank the clerk for the estimate and take the number without discussion. Then at your next group meeting set your goal for signatures at 20% of the higher (yours or the clerk's) estimate. If as you collect signatures and you get near 18% with confidence in good/legible signatures, you might consider stopping at 18% if your resources are stretched. Or if you are doing well you might continue toward 20% - to further educate citizens.
- 4) We all have personality strengths and weaknesses. Choose roles that complement each member's interests and capabilities – and let the person with the personality most suited to communicate with the clerk and board members do so. Ask the more "honest"/"confident" members of your group to have the strength to let others in the group deal with the city/village staff and board – especially for persons known by the community to be actively linked to one party or the other. Our movement's success will be highly related to your group's internal respect and effectiveness, and your ability to maintain in your community the reality, and perception, that the group is non-partisan.

D. Developing a Plan

- 1) Review the “2.B Diagram & Discussion of the Referendum Process” document.
- 2) Determine the timing for the petition drive – you have 60 days to collect signatures from the date the first signature was collected on the first form. Find the document “2.C Petitioning Timeline and Number of Signatures Needed” We also have a simple petition timing calculator (spreadsheet) to help you estimate and track you timing. Find the spreadsheet “2.D Petition Timing Spreadsheet.xls” in the City/Village Handbook on our site.
- 3) Determine how many signatures you need to collect. The statute says you need to collect 15% of the number of persons who voted in the last governor’s race. We recommend you target 20%, rather than the minimum 15%, to ensure you have enough to cover signatures rejected by the municipal clerk – and to build confidence by the clerk. In at least one community, the clerk did not bother checking closely because of the significant extra signatures collected. This will reduce your follow-up work. Contact your UnitedToAmend Advisor for these numbers. Or, use the “2.E Governor Vote Totals 2014.xls” spreadsheet that is part of this handbook on our site.
- 4) Determine how many volunteers you will need – to collect those signatures. Again refer to “2.C Petitioning Timeline and Number of Signatures Needed” in this handbook.
- 5) Develop a plan for how and when to gather signatures: events, locations and door to door signature gathering, etc. And educate by Letters to the Editor, and other methods.
- 6) Develop and plan a training session for signature collectors. Schedule the training to prepare them regarding: what to say (including some background for questions), verifying legibility of names, rules for signing the bottoms of the petitions sheets, where to delivery of sheets, etc. Find “3.C Educating and Training Petitioners.” “3.D Contact Numbers and Tips for Canvassing,” 3.E UTA Petition Instructions When Collecting Signatures,” and “3.F Helpful Things to Say When Petitioning.”
- 7) When you have confidently verified legibility and eligibility of safely more than the minimum number of signatures deliver them to the clerk. And work with the clerk to clear up any discrepancies and deficiencies. The clerk as 15 business days to either certify the signatures or report to you what deficiencies need to be corrected. Again, shooting for the 18% to 20% targets will reduce the risk of delayed certification.
- 8) Get as many volunteers as possible to attend the post-certification board meeting to show presence and determination. If the board does not vote to put it on the ballot the first meeting after certification, stack the room again at the following meeting to show durability of interest. The board has 30 days after certification to approve putting the referendum on the next ballot or pass the resolution directly.
- 9) Educate citizens between the successful board meeting and election day – especially the month before. Possibilities: yard signs, lit drops, Letters to the Editor, radio interviews, door-to-door Supporter Form fill-out campaigns, movie showings (Pay to Play, Park Avenue, etc.) with discussion, pre-election press releases and interviews, post-election press releases and interviews.... Oh, and connecting interested conservatives with George Penn.

E. Preparing Tools and Materials

Most materials you will need (or templates you can modify) are available at <http://wiuta.org/resources/city-village-handbook/>. Here is a list the types of tools provided in each chapter of the Handbook.

- 1) The two documents you read in Chapter 1 gave you and understanding of our goals and values for Reclaiming our Republic. All of our process and tools are designed to accommodate them.
- 2) Chapter 2 provides an overview and provides general Information to help you plan the referendum work:
 - a) 2.A Overview for Getting a Referendum Passed
 - b) 2.B Diagram & Discussion of the Referendum Process
 - c) 2.C Petitioning Timeline and Number of Signatures Needed
 - d) 2.D Petition Timing Calculator (Spreadsheet)
 - e) 2.E 2014 Governor Voting Totals by Municipality
 - f) 2.F Finding Reliable Volunteers
 - g) 2.G Volunteer Contact Info and Interests
 - h) 2.H Petition Signer Tracking Spreadsheet
 - i) 2.I Confirming Names, Residence Addresses, Counties
- 3) Chapter 3 provides tools and information for carrying out a petition drive:
 - a) 3.A WIUTA Supporter Form (Not the petition form)
 - b) 3.C Petition Form (For collecting required signatures)
 - c) 3.C Educating and Training Petitioners
 - d) 3.D ID Card for Petitioning
 - e) 3.E Contact Numbers and Tips for Canvassing
 - f) 3.F WIUTA Petition Instructions When Collecting Signatures
 - g) 3.G Helpful Things to Say When Petitioning
 - h) 3.H Q&A Worth Reading Related to Petition Drives
- 4) Chapter 4 provides tools for communicating with citizens:
 - a) 4.A WI Communities and States List
 - b) 4.B WI Resolution Map
 - c) 4.C WIUTA Tri-Fold Brochure
 - d) 4.D Community Handout
 - e) 4.E. Million Dollar Bill – Door Hanger – Front
 - f) 4.F Million Dollar Bill – Door Hanger – Back
 - g) 4.G Pre-Election 4-Up - pdf
 - h) 4.H Pre-Election 4-Up - doc
 - i) 4.I Community Education Presentation Flyer/Poster
 - j) 4.J Chest & Back Placard Sign for UTA Petition
 - k) 4.K Pre-Ballot Education Flyer/Poster
 - l) 4.L Sample Yard Sign - png
 - m) 4.M We The People Amendment Resolution – H.J.Res.48
 - n) 4.N WI Assembly Resolution AJR 53
 - o) 4.O WI Senate Resolution SJR 54
 - p) 4.P Comparison of the WTP, MTA, WIUTA Amendment languages
 - q) 4.Q Responses to Excuses by Opponents
 - r) 4.R Why conservatives should support an amendment – Loss of Local Sovereignty

- 5) Chapter 5 provides Information to Clerk for the board/council and to send to state and national representatives:
 - a) 5.A Documents Delivered to Clerks and Elected Officials.
 - b) 5.B Cover Letter to Clerk for Petition
 - c) 5.C Certification of UTA Petition
 - d) 5.D Cover Letter to Council or Board
 - e) 5.E Full Resolution Language
 - f) 5.F Sample Ballot Language
 - g) 5.G Public Official Notification Letter
 - h) 5.H Where to Send Labels Avery 8660
 - i) 5.I Type A and Type C Notice examples
- 6) Chapter 6 provides copies of laws related to petitioning: (background information – call WIUTA before digging through these)
 - a) 6.A WI Statute 9.20 on Referenda & Resolutions
 - b) 6.B WI Statute 8.40 Petition requirements
 - c) 6.C Laws on Petitioning Timing
 - d) 6.D Circulation of Petitions on Election Day
 - e) 6.E Circulation of Petitions in Public Buildings
 - f) 6.F When the 60th Day Falls on a Weekend
 - g) 6.G Late Submission - Placement on Ballot
 - h) 6.H Election Day Manual for Wisconsin Election Officials