

The PTA and Ballot Measures

Ballot measures include ballot initiatives, constitutional amendments, bond measures, and referenda. Many states, especially those in the west, have multiple statewide ballot initiatives each election.

PTAs can support or oppose ballot measures

Even though PTAs cannot support or oppose candidates for public office, they can urge voters to support or oppose particular ballot measures. The IRS considers ballot-measure work to be a lobbying activity, because members of the voting public act as legislators when they vote “yes” or “no” on the legislation proposed in the ballot measure. PTAs are allowed to engage in a limited amount of lobbying, and ballot-measure work is considered “direct lobbying” for IRS purposes.

For more information on IRS rules governing PTA lobbying activities, refer to the PTA Money Matters Quick-Reference Guide.

Some specific things PTAs can do

- Publicly endorse or oppose ballot measures
- Propose ballot measures
- Draft language for ballot measures
- Organize volunteers to gather signatures on petitions
- Contribute money to ballot-measure campaigns
- Loan money to ballot-measure campaigns
- Host ballot-measure campaign events
- Register people to vote and encourage them to vote for or against a ballot measure

Some states consider ballot measures to be electoral activity and require nonprofit organizations that work on ballot measures to report their contributions and expenditures under state campaign finance and disclosure laws. Check with your secretary of state’s office for more information.