

# Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2025

The *Election Statutes Amendment Act, 2025* makes changes to several pieces of democratic process related legislation:

- The *Election Act* governs the process for provincial elections, by-elections and plebiscites in Alberta and creates the office of the chief electoral officer, the head of Elections Alberta.
- The *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* governs the financing of provincial elections, Senate elections and referendums. It sets out election financing rules for registered political parties, registered constituency associations, registered prospective candidate associations, registered candidates, registered leadership contestants and registered third parties.<sup>1</sup>
- The *Alberta Senate Election Act* governs the process for Senate elections in Alberta.
- The *Referendum Act* governs the process for referendums in Alberta.<sup>2</sup>
- The *Recall Act* authorizes Albertans to initiate a process that could lead to the recall of elected MLAs.
- The *Citizen Initiative Act* sets out a petition process that allows eligible voters in Alberta to propose legislative initiatives, policy initiatives or constitutional referendum questions to the government. It includes advertising and spending rules for those bringing forward citizen initiative petitions.
- The *Local Authorities Election Act* establishes the framework for the conduct of elections in Alberta municipalities, school divisions, irrigation districts and Metis Settlements.

Changes to the *Local Authorities Election Act* came into force May 15. Amendments to all other acts came into force on July 4.

## Changes for voters and the voting process under the *Election Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
Ban electronic voting tabulators.	The <i>Election Act</i> was silent on tabulator use but the chief electoral officer could make directives for advance voting that would allow their use.
Require voters to cast ballots in their riding or by special ballot.  Require that voting places are available as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ninety-five per cent of voters in an electoral division will be within 50 km of a voting place,</li></ul>	Albertans could vote in person on election day, by special ballot, or at any advance voting location.  Elections Alberta needed to place voting places at locations convenient for electors.

<sup>1</sup> The *Alberta Personal Income Tax Act* and *Legislative Assembly Act* have been changed to align with certain amendments to the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act*

<sup>2</sup> The *Alberta Pension Protection Act* and the *Alberta Taxpayer Protection Act* have been changed to align with certain amendments to the *Referendum Act*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>every population center with 1,000 or more electors will have, at minimum, a voting place on election day and at least one day in which an advance voting location is open,</li> <li>every population center with 2,500 or more residents will have a voting place on election day and an advance voting location on all advance voting days.</li> </ul>	
<p>Eliminate vouching.</p> <p>Expand the types of identification that can be used to prove residence to include anything that satisfies election officers on reasonable grounds that a person lives in the electoral division.</p>	<p>When voting, Albertans could present identification or have another voter vouch for them.</p> <p>Vouching allows a voter without identification to be verified by another eligible voter in the same voting area.</p>
<p>Expand the use of special ballots by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>allowing voters to use a special ballot without first giving a reason,</li> <li>allowing for special ballots to be sent to international destinations, military members and remote areas in advance of the writ for a set election,</li> <li>clarifying that a voter can cast a special ballot by indicating the name of the party leader.</li> </ul> <p>Enhance the integrity of special ballots by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>requiring voters to request a special ballot themselves, except in cases where people need assistance due to disability,</li> <li>requiring the signature on the special ballot to match the signature on the voter's identification.</li> </ul>	<p>Special ballots were only available when a voter was unable to vote on the regular election day for a specified reason (for example, if they were in prison, absent from the electoral division, or physically disabled).</p> <p>Special ballots required that the voter identify either the party or candidate for their electoral division.</p>
<p>Require the unofficial vote count to be completed within 12 hours of polls closing.</p> <p>Require special ballots to be mailed back in time for Elections Alberta to receive them by the Friday before the election and allow special ballots and advance ballots to be counted three hours before polls close.</p>	<p>There was no specific time for the unofficial vote count to be completed.</p> <p>Special ballots could be delivered until the end of voting day.</p>

## Changes for political parties and candidates under the *Election Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
<p>Allow parties to inspect documents.</p> <p>Clarify that scrutineers may observe every aspect of the electoral process.</p>	<p>Only candidates (or their official representative) could inspect documents or request judicial recounts.</p>

Allow parties to begin and participate in judicial recounts and be reimbursed by the Crown for legal expenses related to judicial recounts (as long as their endorsed candidate is not also being reimbursed). <sup>3</sup>	
Prevent a single official agent from acting on behalf of more than one independent candidate.	An official agent for a candidate must be a Canadian citizen, 18 years of age or older, and a resident of Alberta but there were no other restrictions for official agents.
Require municipal councillors and school board trustees to take an unpaid leave of absence when running for provincial office.	There were no rules requiring municipal councillors and school board trustees to take an unpaid leave of absence when running in a provincial election.

## Changes to advertising rules and administrative changes under the *Election Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
<p>Clarify advertising rules for government during elections, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>allow the Premier and ministers to make announcements during emergencies,</li> <li>allow government advertising during a non-constitutional referendum that does not coincide with a general election,</li> <li>clarify government and public agency advertising may continue during by-elections if it does not have a direct and disproportionate impact, and</li> <li>clarify that there are no restrictions on advertising or publishing information about programs and activities outside an election period.</li> </ul>	<p>The <i>Election Act</i> largely prohibits any government department or provincial corporation from publishing information about its programs or activities during an election unless the advertisement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>is required by law,</li> <li>is required at the time to solicit proposals for tenders,</li> <li>relates to urgent matters of public safety,</li> <li>is a continuation of earlier publications, or</li> <li>is an ordinary and routine part of programs or activities of the department or provincial corporation and is not for partisan purposes.</li> </ul>
Allow the minister to regulate election signs and advertisements and prohibit municipalities from making further regulations on signs and advertisements.	Municipalities could enact bylaws related to election signs and advertisements.
Make sure that all chief financial officers appointed under the <i>Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act</i> are not eligible to serve as election officers.	Chief financial officers only for candidates were not eligible to serve as election officers.
Simplify terminology and procedures.	N/A

<sup>3</sup> The [Election Regulation](#), enacted July 4, 2025, specifies that the Crown may be required to pay reasonable and proper costs up to a maximum limit of \$20,000 per candidate or party (but not both)

## Changes to contribution rules under the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
<p>Authorize Alberta corporations and Alberta unions to make contributions to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• registered political parties,</li> <li>• registered constituency associations,</li> <li>• registered prospective candidate associations,</li> <li>• registered leadership contestants,</li> <li>• registered candidates for election under the <i>Alberta Senate Election Act</i>,</li> <li>• registered third parties engaging in election advertising, Senate advertising, and referendum advertising.</li> </ul>	<p>Corporations and unions were prohibited from making contributions to registered political parties; registered constituency associations; nomination contestants; registered leadership contestants; registered candidates under the <i>Alberta Senate Election Act</i>; and third parties engaging in election advertising, Senate election advertising, or referendum advertising.</p> <p>Rules for who may make contributions to third party political advertisers remain. Canadian citizens and permanent residents, if ordinarily a resident in Canada, corporations carrying on business in Canada (unless the sole purpose is to influence voters) and unions with bargaining rights in Canada may make contributions to third-party political advertisers.</p>
<p>Adopt a separate maximum aggregate annual contribution limit of \$5,000 to one or any combination of registered leadership contestants.</p> <p>With this change, there is also a maximum aggregate annual contribution limit of \$5,000 to one or any combination of a registered party, a registered constituency association, a registered prospective candidate association and a registered candidate (nomination contests and contestants will no longer be regulated).</p> <p>Contribution limits will be increased for inflation.</p>	<p>A person who is ordinarily resident in Alberta could contribute a maximum of \$5,000 annually in the aggregate to one or any combination of a registered party, registered constituency association, registered candidate, nomination contestant or registered leadership candidate.</p> <p>A person who is ordinarily resident in Alberta could contribute a maximum aggregate amount of \$5,000 in any year to one or more nomination contestants.</p>
<p>Reduce the maximum limit on contributions to third-party advertisers to \$5,000.</p>	<p>The maximum limit on contributions to third-party advertisers was \$34,400.</p> <p>This limit applies to contributions to third parties engaging in election advertising, political advertising, Senate election advertising, and referendum advertising.</p>
<p>Provide that if the election commissioner determines that a contribution is inadvertent, the election commissioner may not serve a notice of an administrative penalty or send a letter of reprimand, unless the amount of the overcontribution exceeds an amount set by regulation. Provide that the election commissioner must also not consent to a prosecution if</p>	<p>Upon completion of the investigation, if the election commissioner was of the opinion that a person had made an overcontribution the election commissioner could serve a notice of administrative penalty or a letter of reprimand.</p> <p>If a chief financial officer discovers there is an overcontribution, the contribution can be returned to the contributor if they can be</p>

of the opinion that the overcontribution is inadvertent and does not exceed the limit set in regulation. <sup>4</sup>	identified. If the contributor cannot be identified, the money is paid to the chief electoral officer who must pay it into the general revenue fund.
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**Changes to rules for political parties and candidates under the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act***

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
<p>Remove nomination contests from being regulated under the act.</p> <p>The <i>Legislative Assembly Act</i> will be amended to reflect that nomination contests and contestants are no longer regulated under the <i>Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act</i>.</p>	<p>Nomination contests and nomination contestants were regulated under the act.</p> <p>Under the <i>Legislative Assembly Act</i>, a nomination contestant or a registered candidate could be disqualified from being a member of the legislative assembly if they or their chief financial officer had not filed a required report.</p>
<p>For a provincial general election, adopt a maximum election expense limit of \$5,000,000 per registered political party.</p> <p>Increase the maximum election expense limit per registered candidate to \$75,000.</p> <p>Increase the by-election expense limit for a registered political party to \$75,000.</p> <p>Amounts are adjusted for inflation.</p>	<p>The maximum election expense limit for a registered political party during a general election was calculated using a formula.</p> <p>The maximum election expense limit for a registered candidate was \$60,800.</p> <p>The maximum by-election expense limit for a registered political party was \$28,000.</p> <p>Amounts were adjusted for inflation.</p>
<p>Allow independent candidates and others to register a prospective candidate association. Like a registered constituency association, a registered prospective candidate association must appoint a chief financial officer; receipt, record, and report contributions; and adhere to contribution, expense, fundraising and transfer rules.</p> <p>Ensure that most of the rules that apply to a registered constituency association apply.</p> <p>Amendments to the <i>Alberta Personal Income Tax Act</i> will extend the existing individual tax credit for political contributions so it applies to contributions to registered prospective candidate associations.</p>	<p>Candidates may raise funds during a campaign period. An independent candidate could establish a constituency association once elected. A person endorsed by a registered party may be supported by a constituency association at all times.</p> <p>The tax credit applies to individual contributions to a registered party, registered constituency association, registered candidate or registered leadership contestant.</p>
<p>Add the following reasons the chief electoral officer could decline to register a political party:</p>	

<sup>4</sup> The [Excess Contribution Threshold Regulation](#), enacted July 4, 2025, specifies that the overcontribution limit is \$10,000 in excess of the contribution limit (the contribution limit is \$5,000)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The party is not incorporated as a society or a non-for-profit company,</li> <li>• The party has the same or similar name or abbreviation as a local political party, and</li> <li>• The party has not nominated candidates in at least 50 per cent of electoral divisions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was no obligation for a political party to incorporate as a non-profit society or company.</li> <li>• The chief electoral officer may refuse to register a party if of the opinion that the name or abbreviation of the applying party is likely to be confused with the name or abbreviation of another registered party.</li> <li>• To register, a party must endorse candidates in 50 per cent of electoral divisions.</li> </ul>
Allow registered political parties to sell merchandise at fair market value without issuing a contribution receipt, except for amounts that exceed the fair market value.	The act was silent.
Allow people to purchase memberships for family members without needing a contribution receipt for amounts under \$50 except for the per-person amounts that exceed \$50.	Individuals could only purchase their own membership.

## Changes to rules for third parties and third party advertising under the *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
<p>Increase the aggregate third-party election advertising spending limit for each of the pre-writ and writ period to \$500,000.</p> <p>Increase the third-party election advertising expense limit for promoting or opposing the election of one or more registered candidates in an electoral division to \$10,000.</p> <p>Limits are adjusted for inflation.</p>	<p>The aggregate third party election advertising spending limit for each of the pre-writ and writ period was \$182,200.</p> <p>A third-party election advertiser was prohibited from spending more than \$3,700 to promote or oppose one or more registered candidates in an electoral division.</p>
<p>Require the chief electoral officer to refuse a third-party registration if one of the criteria for finding it is affiliated with a registered political party is met.</p> <p>Add a new criterion that a third party is affiliated with a registered political party “if one person holds a position on the governing body of a third party and the governing body of a registered party.”</p> <p>Require a third party to provide a declaration that the third party is not acting directly or indirectly on behalf of a registered party.</p> <p>Allow for regulations that add new criteria to the test for whether a third party is affiliated with a registered political party.</p>	<p>To determine if a third party is affiliated with a registered political party, the chief electoral officer considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The organization of the third party, including whether a person holding the position of chief financial officer, signing officer, principal officer, or if there are no principal officers, principal member, with the third party holds the same position with the registered political party.</li> <li>• Any interactions or agreements between the third party and the registered political party, including those that may indicate that the third party is under the control of the registered political party.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the third party participates in the decision-making process of the registered political party pursuant to the constitution or founding documents of the registered political party.</li> </ul> <p>If the chief electoral officer finds that a third party and a registered political party are affiliated, the chief electoral officer must refuse or cancel the registration.</p>
Provide that advertising in support of or in opposition to candidates seeking a position within a registered party's governing body is not a prohibited third party activity.	N/A

## Changes to the investigation and complaint resolution process under the *Election Act* and *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
Require the chief electoral officer to retain documents for six months and allow inspection of documents for up to three months.	The chief electoral officer needed to retain documents for three months and allow inspection of documents for up to 30 days.
Allow the chief electoral officer to provide and publish advice and directions.	Both acts were silent on this.
Require the election commissioner to notify the subject of investigations of the allegations at the beginning of an investigation unless it would compromise the investigation.	Both acts required the subject of the investigation to be notified before the investigation was completed.
Allow any person appearing before the election commissioner to be represented by counsel, and any person, including the election commissioner, to record any proceedings at which evidence is given.	The acts were silent on representation by counsel and recording of evidence.
<p>Shorten overall time period for issuing an administrative penalty or letter of reprimand to one year after the date on which the election commissioner received a complaint, or two years after the date on which the election commissioner knew or ought to have known of a matter that permits the election commissioner to conduct an investigation, whichever is earlier.</p> <p>Where the election commissioner receives more than one complaint about the same subject-matter, the time is calculated from the receipt of the first complaint.</p> <p>Provide timelines for giving evidence and introduce a shortened process for investigating complaints made during the writ period.</p>	Investigations could occur up to three years after the alleged contravention. There was no shortened process for complaints received during an election.

Prohibit investigation of complaints where the election commissioner does not have reasonable grounds to believe the matter constitutes an offence under the act.	There was no requirement for the election commissioner to be satisfied there were reasonable grounds to believe an offence had occurred.
Specify what information can be disclosed where the election commissioner refuses to investigate a complaint, consents to a prosecution, enters a compliance agreement, or issues a reprimand or administrative penalty.	The election commissioner could disclose any information they considered appropriate in addition to disclosing findings and decisions.
Ensure the burden of proof for an appeal of an administrative penalty lies with the election commissioner.	The acts were silent on what the election commissioner needed to establish when an administrative penalty was subject to judicial review.
State that the chief electoral officer and election commissioner are not required to publish information that would reveal the name of a complainant or witness unless directed by a court or if that person consents (this update will be to the <i>Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act</i> only).	<p>The <i>Election Act</i> already stated that the chief electoral officer and election commissioner are not required to publish any information that would reveal the name of a complainant or witness unless directed by a court or if that person consents.</p> <p>The <i>Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act</i> was silent on this.</p>
<p>Increase penalties for noncompliance where appropriate. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General contraventions will carry a maximum fine of \$10,000,</li> <li>• Neglecting duties as an election officer will carry maximum fines of \$10,000 (for returning officers) and \$5,000 (for others),</li> <li>• Damaging or removing required notices will carry a maximum fine of \$5,000, and</li> <li>• Making false claims in relation to the character of a candidate will carry a maximum fine of \$50,000.</li> </ul> <p>These changes align with maximums for comparable offences in other Alberta democratic process legislation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General contraventions carried a maximum fine of \$5,000.</li> <li>• Neglecting duties as an election officer carried a maximum fine of \$5,000 for returning officers and \$2,000 for others.</li> <li>• Damaging or removing required notices carried a maximum penalty of \$2,000.</li> </ul> <p>Making false statements in relation to the character of a candidate carried a maximum fine of \$10,000.</p>

## Changes to improve accessibility under the *Alberta Senate Election Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
Enable the chief electoral officer to conduct Senate elections for First Nations and Metis Settlements when held in conjunction with a municipal election.	<p>The chief electoral officer can conduct Senate elections for First Nations and Metis Settlements when held in conjunction with a provincial general election or when they are held on a stand-alone basis.</p> <p>However, the chief electoral officer did not have authority to conduct a Senate election vote on a First Nation or Metis settlement if the Senate election were to be held in conjunction with municipal elections. In this circumstance, the Minister of Municipal Affairs was responsible for conducting the Senate election vote for First Nations, and</p>



	Metis Settlements were directly empowered to conduct the Senate election vote.
<p>Expressly allow the chief electoral officer to recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that a Senate election be discontinued and recommenced another day during emergencies.</p> <p>Expressly allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to discontinue and recommence voting on another day during emergencies.</p> <p>An emergency could include a disaster or unusual or unforeseen circumstances that are likely to have a significant effect on the conduct of a vote including voters' ability to attend a voting station or circumstances that put the health and safety of a person at risk.</p>	The <i>Alberta Senate Election Act</i> did not contain express rules with respect to the adjournment of Senate elections in emergencies.
Reflect that the <i>Local Authorities Election Act</i> now requires municipalities to maintain a permanent electors register.	The <i>Alberta Senate Election Act</i> was not aligned with the <i>Local Authorities Election Act</i> relating to the requirement that municipalities maintain a permanent electors register.

## Changes to improve accessibility under the *Referendum Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
Enable the chief electoral officer to conduct referendum votes for First Nations and Metis Settlements when held in conjunction with a municipal election.	<p>The chief electoral officer can conduct referendum votes for First Nations and Metis Settlements when held in conjunction with a provincial general election or when they are held on a stand-alone basis.</p> <p>However, the chief electoral officer did not have authority to conduct a referendum on a First Nation or Metis settlement if the referendum were to be held in conjunction with municipal elections. In this circumstance, the Minister of Municipal Affairs was responsible for conducting the referendum vote for First Nations, and Metis Settlements were directly empowered to conduct the referendum vote.</p>
<p>Allow the chief electoral officer to recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council that voting in a referendum be discontinued and recommenced another day during emergencies.</p> <p>Allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to discontinue and recommence referendum voting on another day during emergencies.</p> <p>An emergency could include a disaster or unusual or unforeseen circumstances that are likely to have a significant effect on the conduct</p>	<p>Existing rules under the <i>Election Act</i> allow the chief electoral officer to adjourn voting to another time or to another place on the same date in certain circumstances during emergencies. These rules apply to referendums held in conjunction with provincial elections or stand-alone referendums.</p> <p>Previously, the Minister of Municipal Affairs could extend, adjourn or take any other</p>

of a vote including voters' ability to attend a voting station or circumstances that put the health and safety of a person at risk.	action in emergencies under the <i>Local Authorities Election Act</i> . These rules applied to a referendum held in conjunction with a municipal election.
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## Changes to create clarity, consistency and accountability under the *Referendum Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
Require third party referendum advertisers to indicate if they are for or against a referendum question or questions. This change is included in the <i>Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act</i> but applies to referendums.	There was no requirement for third party referendum advertisers to indicate if they were for or against a referendum question or questions.
Remove the requirement for a referendum to occur before the Legislative Assembly makes a resolution authorizing an amendment to the Constitution of Canada.  This change is reflected in consequential amendments to the <i>Alberta Taxpayer Protection Act</i> .	A referendum had to be held before the Legislative Assembly made a resolution authorizing an amendment to the Constitution of Canada.
Add a section that states nothing in a referendum held under this act is to be construed as abrogating or derogating from the existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada that are recognized and affirmed by <a href="#">section 35</a> of the <a href="#">Constitution Act, 1982</a> .	N/A

## Changes to create flexibility under the *Referendum Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
Allow the government to determine how and when the <i>Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act</i> would apply to a referendum through regulation. However, specify that only Alberta entities can engage in third-party referendum advertising.  This change is reflected in consequential amendments to the <i>Alberta Pension Protection Act</i> .	The <i>Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act</i> sets out restrictions on referendum advertising contributions and spending limits, disclosure of referendum advertising contributions, reports and financial statements, and many more aspects of financing and disclosure for third-party referendum advertisers.

## Changes to improve efficiency under the *Recall Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
Reduce to 100 the number of words permitted from the applicant on the recall petition form and allow seven days for a responding statement from the elected MLA who is being recalled.	A recall application needed to include a statement of not more than 200 words explaining why the MLA should be recalled.

	There was no process for an MLA to provide a responding statement.
<p>Require the chief electoral officer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>determine within seven days if the requirements for issuing a recall petition have been met,</li> <li>verify within 21 days whether a recall vote is authorized,</li> <li>report the recall petition results within seven days after completing the verification of results.</li> </ul>	<p>If the requirements for a recall petition had been met, the chief electoral officer needed to provide notice of the recall petition within seven days.</p> <p>If the requirements for a recall petition had not been met, the chief electoral officer needed to notify the applicant but there was no timeline for notification.</p> <p>The chief electoral officer needed to verify whether a recall vote was authorized within 30 days.</p> <p>The chief electoral officer was required to report the results of the recall petition as soon as was practicable after completing the verification of results but there was no set time limit.</p>
Reduce the period of time required for a recall vote to be issued to four months from the date on which the successful petition results are published.	The recall vote needed to be issued within six months from the date on which the successful petition results were published.

## Changes to make it easier to recall an MLA under the *Recall Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
Provide that recall petitions can only begin 12 months after an MLA is elected and may not be issued 12 months before a set date general election.	An applicant could not submit an application for recall until 18 months after an election nor within six months of an upcoming set date general election.
<p>Extend the recall petition signature collection timeline to 90 days.</p> <p>Change the threshold for signatures to 60 per cent of the total number of electors who voted in the electoral district in the most recent election.</p>	<p>Once the chief electoral officer issued a recall petition, there were 60 days to collect signatures.</p> <p>A recall vote was authorized if the recall petition had been signed by at least 40 per cent of the total number of electors on the post-election-day list of electors, for the electoral division named in the recall petition.</p>

# Changes to improve consistency between the *Recall Act* and other democratic process legislation

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
Allow union and corporate contributions. This aligns with changes to the <i>Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act</i> and <i>Citizen Initiative Act</i> .	Union and corporate contributions were not permitted.

## Changes to improve efficiency and consistency under the *Citizen Initiative Act*

The citizen initiative process includes several steps:

- An eligible Alberta voter applies to the chief electoral officer to start a petition for their initiative.
- The chief electoral officer determines whether to approve the petition, if the application meets the requirements.
- The chief electoral officer issues the petition, including signing sheets for collecting signatures, and then the petition applicant (now known as the proponent) collects signatures.
- The chief electoral officer reviews the signatures and determines if the petition has been successful. Successful legislative and policy initiatives are referred to a committee of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta for consideration. If the committee does not support a legislative initiative, a public vote is held. Successful constitutional initiative petitions go directly to a public vote.
- Constitutional and policy initiatives proceed by way of referendum, while legislative initiatives proceed by way of citizen initiative vote.

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
Align the three types of citizen initiatives (policy, legislative, and constitutional), by changing the threshold for a successful citizen initiative petition to 10 per cent of the number of eligible voters who voted in the last general election.	To be successful, an initiative petition needed to have signatures from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 10 per cent of registered voters province-wide for legislative and policy initiatives; and</li><li>• 20 per cent of registered voters province-wide and in two-thirds of Alberta's constituencies for constitutional initiatives.</li></ul>
The petition applicant is given 120 days to gather the required signatures.	The petition applicant was given 90 days to gather the required signatures
Require the chief electoral officer to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• decide within 30 days if requirements have been met to issue a petition and, if the chief electoral officer refers the matter to the court, the chief electoral officer has an additional 30 days after the court decision to decide if requirements have been met,</li><li>• provide notice within seven days that a proposal for a petition has been forwarded to the court and that the petition applicant has the right to be a party before the court and has a right to be heard,</li><li>• issue the initiative petition within seven days after the Notice of Initiative petition is posted on the chief electoral officer's website as a heads up to any interested third parties, and</li></ul>	<p>There was no timeline for the chief electoral officer to decide if requirements had been met to issue a petition.</p> <p>The chief electoral officer was required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provide notice 14 days before the proceeding that a proposal for a petition had been forwarded to the court.</li><li>• Issue the initiative petition within 30 days after the Notice of Initiative Petition was posted on the chief electoral officer's</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>verify within 21 days whether a citizen initiative petition has met signature requirements.</li> </ul>	<p>website as a heads up to any interested third parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verify within 60 days whether an initiative petition had met signature requirements.</li> </ul>
<p>Specify that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>successful initiative petitions completed one year or more before the next set election date must, if required, have an initiative vote on or before that set election date,</li> <li>initiative petitions successfully completed after this deadline will, if required, have an initiative vote after the set election date but before the next set election date.</li> </ul>	<p>There was no requirement in the act for this.</p>
<p>Require that the rules set out in the <i>Elections Act</i> are followed, as appropriate, when a vote is held.</p>	<p>An initiative vote must be set by order-in-council under the authority of sections 128 and 130 of the <i>Election Act</i>. However, the <i>Citizen Initiative Act</i> did not expressly set out that the conduct for an initiative vote should follow, as closely as possible, the rules set out in the <i>Election Act</i>.</p>

## Changes to improve consistency, efficiency, fairness and accountability under the *Citizen Initiative Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before the Amendments
<p>Allow union and corporation contributions. This aligns with changes to the <i>Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act</i> and <i>Recall Act</i>.</p>	<p>Union and corporation contributions were not permitted.</p>

## Changes to maintain consistency under the *Local Authorities Election Act*

Description of Changes	Status Before Amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require all local municipal and school board candidates across Alberta and third-party advertisers to report their campaign finances by September 30 of the election year, in advance of elections that are regularly held in October. This approach is consistent with requirements for local political parties in Calgary and Edmonton that were introduced through regulatory amendments related to the <i>Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act, 2025</i>.</li> </ul>	<p>The <i>Local Authorities Election Act</i> required all candidates in all municipalities, to report their campaign finances by March 1 following each year that they received contributions. This applied to independent candidates across Alberta as well as candidates affiliated with local political parties in Calgary and Edmonton.</p> <p>A third-party advertiser who advertises messages that promote or oppose the election of a candidate or an issue on a ballot needed to file a campaign disclosure statement on March 1 after the general election.</p>