

Bill 23: Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2026

Spring 2026

The *Justice Statutes Amendment Act, 2026* makes amendments to several pieces of Alberta legislation.

Citizen Initiative Act

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.

Proposed changes would:

- prohibit citizen initiative petitions from starting or continuing within the period from 12 months before to 12 months after a general election;
- repeal deadlines for holding a referendum resulting from successful policy or constitutional referendum proposal;
- allow the Minister of Justice and the petition proponent to appoint scrutineers to oversee the verification of petition signatures; and
- require the Chief Electoral Officer to keep successful initiative petition signature sheets for two years.
 - Currently, citizen initiative petition signature sheets are kept for one year.

Recall Act

The *Recall Act* allows voters in Alberta to initiate a process that could lead to the recall of an elected MLA.

Proposed changes would:

- allow the MLA named in the recall petition and the petition applicant to appoint scrutineers to oversee the verification of petition signatures; and
- clarify that the Chief Electoral Officer must keep successful recall petition signature sheets until a recall vote is complete.

Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act

The *Election Finances and Contributions Disclosure Act* governs the financing of provincial elections, Senate elections and referendums. It sets out the rules relating to political contributions, financial reporting, third-party advertising and leadership contests.

Proposed changes would:

- Prohibit individuals and entities from creating deepfakes that, if published or distributed by the creator, are likely to mislead voters about the conduct or statements of a party leader, minister, MLA, candidate, leadership or nomination contestant, the Chief Electoral Officer, the Election Commissioner, Elections Alberta employees or election officers.
- Prohibit individuals and entities from publishing or distributing deepfakes they did not create that are likely to mislead voters about the conduct or statements of any one of these individuals, if there is an intent to mislead voters in this way.
 - Deepfake is a term used to describe seemingly realistic media, appearing to depict a real person, that are digitally created or manipulated.

Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act

The *Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act* requires disclosure of compensation and severance for employees earning over a specified threshold and all public agency board members every June 30. In 2017, a second disclosure was added, for severance information on December 31 of each year. The disclosure in June duplicates this severance information for the previous calendar year.

Proposed changes would:

- Lower the threshold for disclosure of public sector compensation from \$133,813 to \$130,000 (in base salary) for Government of Alberta employees and \$159,676 to \$130,000 (in total compensation) for broader public sector bodies to be consistent with the original intent of the act.
- Reduce the frequency of severance disclosure from twice to once per year to save time and effort without losing any transparency.