



Ballot Initiative STRATEGY CENTER

Ballot Initiative Overview

2008 Election

Nebraska

In 2006, Nebraska was one of three states where Howie Rich, the libertarian New York developer, succeeded in putting TABOR on the ballot. Rich had also attempted to place TABOR on the ballots in six other states, but those efforts failed due to widespread evidence of fraudulent signature gathering. Nebraskans rejected Rich's TABOR attempt, 70% to 30%.

In 2008, another out-of-state ideologue is attempting to change Nebraska law. Ward Connerly, the California developer and the sponsor of California's Proposition 209, is trying to get Nebraska to ban its equal opportunity programs for women and people of color. Despite warnings from Nebraska's campaign finance authorities, Connerly has refused to disclose the individuals or corporations that have contributed to his efforts in Nebraska. Connerly's initiative is opposed by a bipartisan coalition that includes Nebraska's universities, labor unions and business leaders.

Nebraska adopted the initiative process in 1914 and has used it to adopt unique public policy changes on multiple occasions. In 1934, for instance, Nebraska voters adopted a non-partisan one-house legislature, the "Unicameral." Direct democracy also played a role in making Nebraska the only state in the country with all public power utilities and the first state to ban corporations from purchasing farms.

Two measures were on the statewide ballot (one passed).

One was a citizen-petitioned initiative.

One was a legislative referendum.

1 Constitutional Amendment Qualified

Initiative Measure 424: Equal Opportunity

Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative: Shall the Nebraska Constitution be amended to prohibit the State, any public institution of higher education, political subdivision or government institution from discriminating against, or granting preferential treatment to, individuals or groups based

upon race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in operating public employment, education or contracting? Existing court orders are not invalidated, bona fide qualifications based on sex reasonably necessary to normal operation of public employment, education or contracting, and actions necessary to obtain federal funds through federal programs are permitted. A cause of action for violation is created. The amendment applies to actions after its adoption.

Proponents: Nebraska Civil Rights Initiative, <http://www.nebraskacri.org/>

Opponents: Nebraskans United, <http://www.nebraskansunited.org/>

PASSED 58% - 42%

1 Constitutional Amendment Was Referred

Amendment Number 1: Investment/Taxes

LR 229CA: A constitutional amendment to change the powers of municipalities relating to fund sources for economic or industrial development.

FAILED 46% - 54%

For additional information please check with the Nebraska Secretary of State:

<http://www.sos.state.ne.us/dyindex.html>