

nine months in advance of the election date, and that changes the law from four months before the election date to nine months before the election date. Why is this important? It is important because it would then require that petitions be filed by the first week in February. If they're filed the first week in February, the Legislature will be in session, and the Legislature will know what each and every petition that's going to be on the ballot, what it is, that it will be on the ballot, and then we will have the opportunity to deal with it. We will have the opportunity of putting statute into place, if we want to put some statute into place, or we will have the alternative of putting an alternative constitutional amendment in place if we think that the special interest group that has promoted a petition has made it too narrow, unreasonable in some way. I think that this process could enhance the whole process and...and be an improvement to the people of the state by offering them, in cases where they may be between a poorly drafted petition and wanting to do something, it can bring the Legislature back into play and bring out of all of this petition stuff a more reasonable process. There are a number of other arguments that I would make, but this year, for example, we are in a position where we have already rejected the gambling proposition and now we face the uncertainty of knowing whether or not there will be a gambling petition out there. I think everybody would have been better off if we had known ahead of time what the fact of the matter is. It would have been to our advantage and to the advantage of the people of the state. We are also now facing property tax reform. The fact that those petition drives sit out there distort our judgments on these matters and we will have to proceed to do what we are going to do this session, not knowing whether or not the people of the state are going to sign enough petitions, whether they're really interested in these petitions out there or not. I cannot see why we should handicap ourselves in this way, and we can fix it so easily, so easily with one little amendment that changes it, the requirement for filing petitions from four months before to nine months before. The argument has been raised, but that cuts down on the time they have to circulate petitions, and that's why I hope you will just take a minute to look at this sheet that I passed out to you because I want to point out to you what it does. The states that are listed on this sheet, on these sheets, are the ones that allow initiative petitions. So you see we are one of the most liberal states in the Union. What are there, three, six, nine, not even half of the states allow