



**Election Integrity Project<sup>®</sup> California**  
EVERY LAWFULLY CAST VOTE ACCURATELY COUNTED

## **Apparently, Not All Recall Elections are Created Equal**

On August 15, several media outlets reported that the recent effort to recall Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascón has come up short in providing enough “valid signatures” for it to be officially on the November ballot.

Despite a poll conducted from May 19 through May 25 indicating that 45% of voters were in support of a ballot effort to remove Gascón as Los Angeles District Attorney, county election officials announced that the recall campaign fell short by nearly 50,000 signatures.

Recall organizers were able to amass 717,000 signatures for the effort, much more than the officially 566,857 valid signatures required to qualify for the November ballot.

However, although recall leaders were careful to have the 717,000 signatures validated by an outside firm before submission to the Registrar of Voters, the county officials only deemed 520,050 to be “valid,” approximately 47,000 shy of the official requirement.

Concerns over Los Angeles County’s prohibition of allowing citizens to observe the signature validation and verification processes surfaced in late July when the *Washington Examiner* revealed that the Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters determined the effort to recall District Attorney Gascón did not meet the standard definition of an “election.”

Therefore, they claimed that the processes by which the measure would be qualified for the November ballot were not subject to the citizen observation rights afforded by California law. No observers would be allowed to view the signature validation or verification process.

That may be news to thousands of Californians who participated in the observation of the recall election of Governor Gavin Newsom less than a year ago. Certainly, volunteer observers were allowed in L.A. County in the election of 2021. One has to wonder what is the difference? Why doesn’t the Gascón recall election “meet the standard?”

All citizens have the right to observe all election processes in the state, by California law. The Election Integrity Project<sup>®</sup> *California* (along with all other citizen organizations and individual interested citizens) has “been allowed” to send observers into county Registrars of Voters offices across the state of California since 2012.

An additional concern came from the Recall Campaign itself as the organizers claimed that the L.A. County Registrar of Voters appeared not to have followed the current California [signature verification laws](#) in the process of dealing with their recall attempt.

The emergency uniform guidelines for elections designed to prevent “voter disenfranchisement” put in place in 2020 were made permanent in 2022 and apply equally to recall petitions.

In that legislation, elections officials must begin signature verification with the premise that each signature is in fact the voter’s signature. There are specific procedures under law of how a voter’s signature is to be reviewed.

The petitions bearing the signatures for the Gascón recall election were submitted to the Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters on July 6. No observers were allowed to view the process. On August 8, the law firm of Steve Cooley, a former Los Angeles County District Attorney and candidate for California Attorney General, [sent a very detailed letter to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors](#) quoting California election codes with regard to the rights of citizens to observe elections and illuminating a glaring double standard being exercised in the procedures of handling this recall election.

One prevailing question over this entire incident revolves around why this recall election did not “meet the standard” of an election that would have allowed election observers to monitor the signature verification process. To arbitrarily redefine what an election is for whatever purpose runs counter to the rule of law. If the right to observe the process of signature verification exists in other recall elections but not in this recall election, **the result is a blatant violation of citizen rights.**

If those in positions of authority simply change the rules at whim, citizens do not have responsive elected officials, and citizens lose trust in an unequal or unjust practice of the law that is intended to protect their rights.

The unequal or unjust practice of the law that violates citizens’ rights runs counter to the fundamental concept embedded in the Declaration of Independence that all citizens have God-given rights that are not to be taken away by temporal governments or the whims of those who have been granted their authority through the trust of the people.

When the government no longer shows that it is performing to protect our God-given rights, it shows itself to be tyrannical.