

Improving Direct Democracy through the Citizens' Initiative Review

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The Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR) aims to make voters more informed and reflective during direct democratic elections.



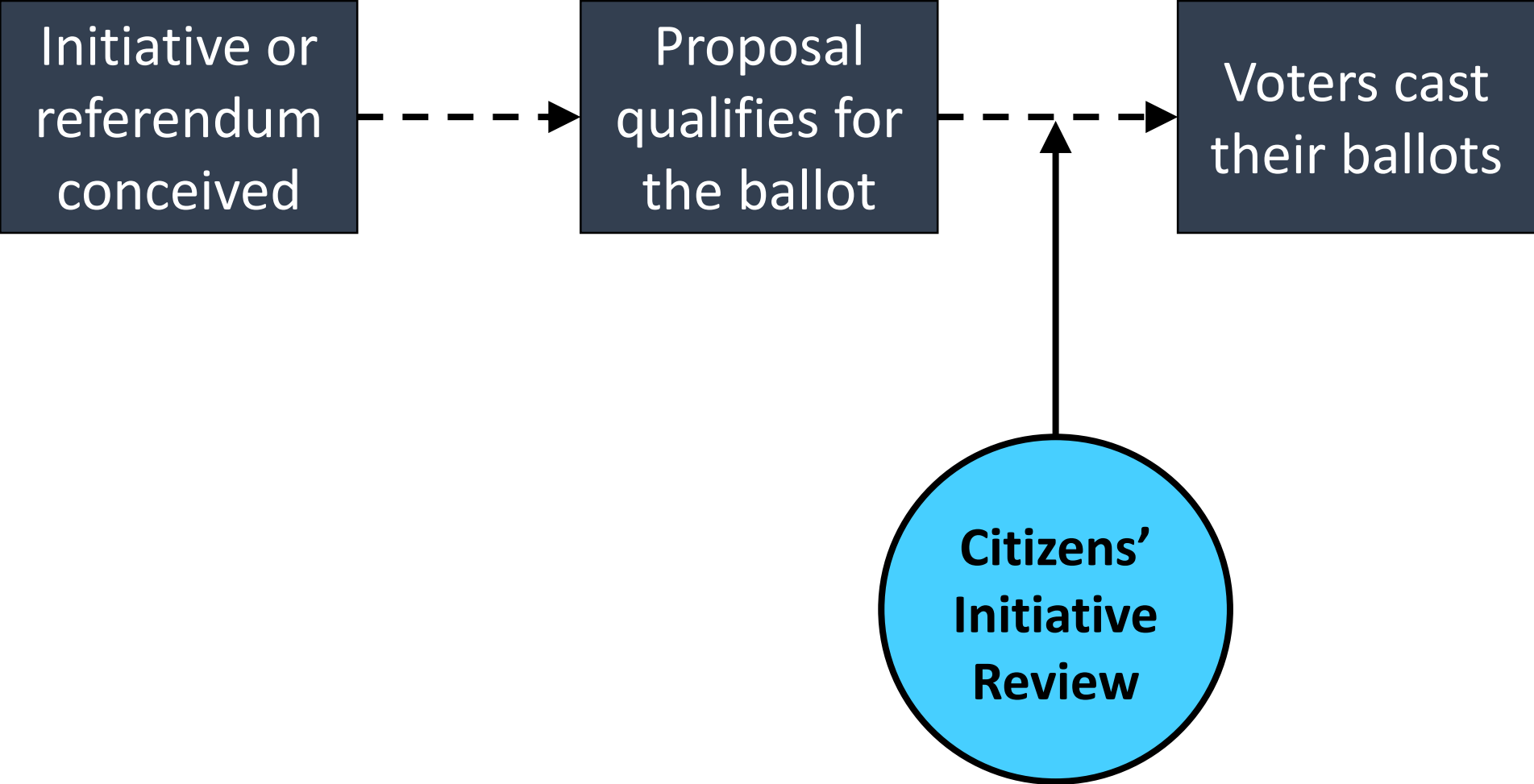
Direct democracy is **rarely** deliberative

- Direct democratic “**ballot measures**” include initiatives, referenda, bond measures, and any other policy or budgetary issue that appears on a ballot.
- The electorate has **limited knowledge** of what ballot measures would actually do.
- Voters are **biased** in how they select, process, and retain information about ballot measures.
- When deciding how to mark their ballots, voters **fail to consider counter-arguments** from opposing viewpoints.
- Partisan voters often rely on the recommendations of their parties **without further consideration**.

A CIR panel writes a one-page statement that gives voters information (and sometimes an implicit recommendation).



The CIR takes place during the middle of a direct democratic electoral process.



The CIR has three steps: stratified sample, four-day deliberation, published statement.

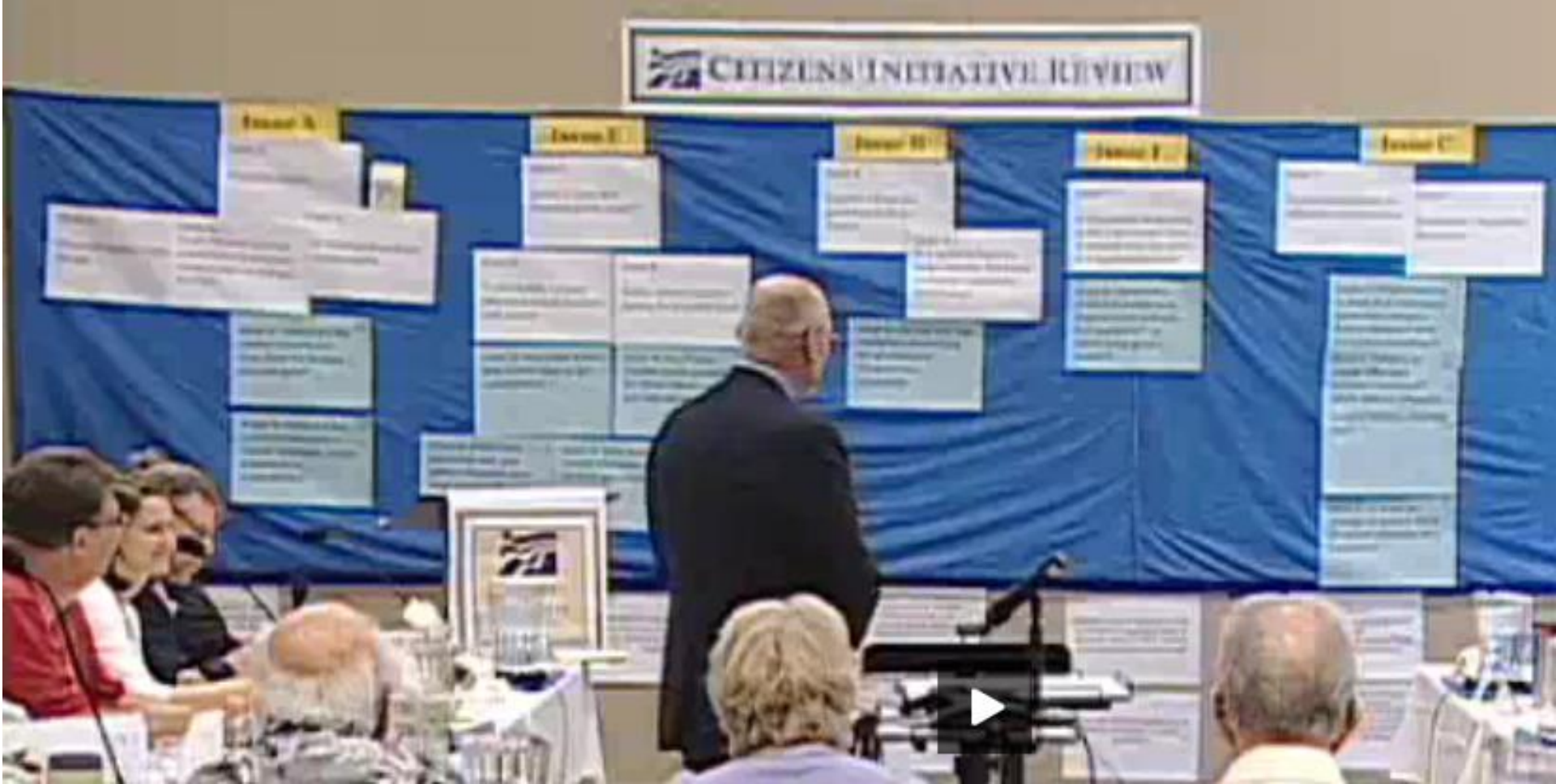


CIR process explained

- **Context:** State legislators want to help voters make better decisions.
- **Status:** CIR established by law in Oregon (2009) and under consideration in Massachusetts (2016-2018)
- **Trigger:** A CIR Commission (made up of former CIR panelists and political appointees) chooses issues.
- **Funding:** Oregon CIR paid for by private foundations; Massachusetts would use state funds to pay for it.
- **Mandate:** authorized to write one-page statement about the ballot measure, which includes key findings and reasons for and against the measure.

CIR process explained

- **Selection:** Invitations sent to a sample of registered voters, then demographic stratification is used to form the panel.
- **Deliberation/Decision:** Four-day agenda that gives panelists enough time for deliberation
- **Experts and witnesses:** Pro/Con advocates testify, along with content experts chosen by the convener.
- **Evaluation:** CIRs assessed for deliberative quality, Citizens' Statement, and impact on the electorate.
- **Implementation:** Statement is distributed through the Voters' Pamphlet.



A more detailed description
of the CIR process and its adoption

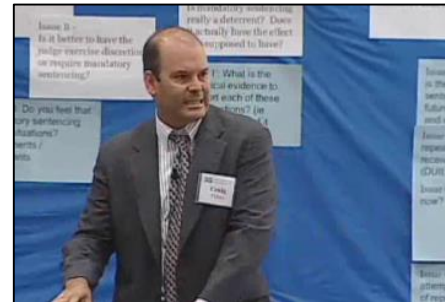
DAY ONE

Orientation to the CIR
and the ballot measure



DAY TWO

Pro/Con presentations
and group deliberation



DAY THREE

Pro/Con closing
Statement writing begins

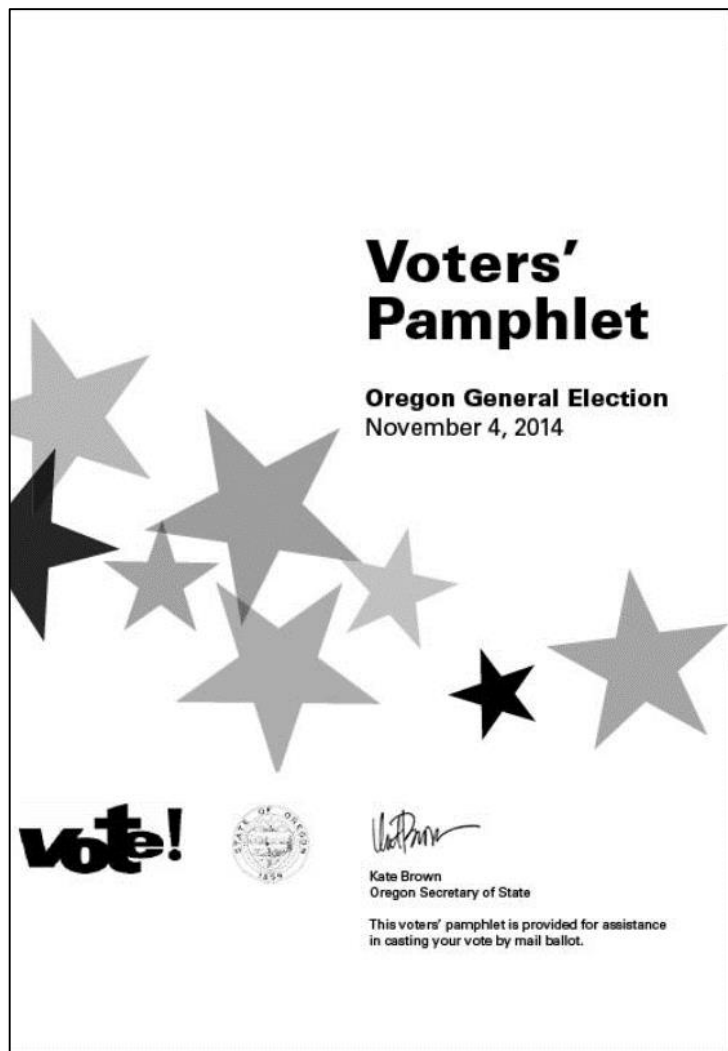


DAY FOUR

Complete Statement
Present findings



The Oregon Voters' Pamphlet includes a section on every statewide ballot measure.



Measures Measure 92 121	
Proposed by initiative petition to be voted on at the General Election, November 4, 2014.	
Ballot Title	Requires food manufacturers, retailers to label "genetically engineered" foods as such; state, citizens may enforce
92	
Estimate of Financial Impact	121
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Arguments in Opposition	133

Result of "Yes" Vote	Summary
"Yes" vote requires the labeling of raw and packaged foods produced entirely or partially by "genetic engineering," effective January 2016; applies to retailers, suppliers, manufacturers.	Current law does not require labeling of "genetically engineered" food. Measure requires retailers of genetically-engineered raw food to include "Genetically Engineered" on packages, display bins, or shelves; suppliers must label shipping containers. Requires manufacturers of packaged food produced entirely or partially by genetic engineering to include "Produced with Genetic Engineering" or "Partially Produced with Genetic Engineering" on packages. Defines "genetically engineered" food as food produced from organisms with genetic material changed through <i>in vitro</i> nucleic acid techniques and certain cell-fusing techniques; exempts traditional plant-breeding techniques like hybridization. Does not apply to animal feed or food served in restaurants. Directs agencies to implement law. Permits state, injured citizen to sue manufacturer, retailer for knowing/intentional violation; attorney fees for prevailing citizen. Other provisions.
Result of "No" Vote	Estimate of Financial Impact
"No" vote retains existing law, which does not require "genetically engineered" food to be labeled as such.	The measure requires the State Department of Agriculture and/or the Oregon Health Authority to prescribe, enact, and enforce rules necessary to ensure that food manufacturers and retailers properly label raw and packaged food that is entirely or partially produced with genetic engineering. The measure is expected to result in direct expenditures by State agencies for initial one time start-up costs estimated at between \$550,000 and \$600,000. Costs associated with ongoing enforcement have variable assumptions about the level of administrative oversight. There are potential indirect economic effects that may be offsetting. Therefore, the direct financial impact and indirect economic impact is indeterminate.
	There is no anticipated effect on local government.

Citizens' Initiative Review of Proposition 105

This Citizens' Statement was developed by an independent panel of 20 Colorado voters, chosen at random from the voting population of Colorado, and balanced to fairly reflect the state's voting population. The panel has issued this statement after 3.5 days of hearings and deliberation. This statement has not been edited nor has the content been altered.

Key Findings

- Sixty-four countries around the world require GMO labeling, and 16 of the top 25 countries that import Colorado food products require GMO labeling. Many US food manufacturers already label their foods that contain GMOs for export to these countries.
- Labels required by Proposition 105 would not tell consumers which ingredients in a packaged food product are GMOs, or what percentage of the product is GMO ingredients.
- Existing food labels already provide information about GMOs.
- Approximately 2/3 of the foods and beverages we buy and consume would be exempt from labeling if they come from animals raised on GMO feed and grain.
- Proposition 105 is not a ban on GMOs.
- Genetic modification takes place naturally in nature.
- Proposition 105 would not require labeling of foods and beverages even if they don't contain GMOs.
- Prop 105 will require importers to document and label foods and beverages.
- Documenting and labeling foods and beverages would cost farmers, food producers and consumers.
- No long-term epidemiologic studies have shown a link between GMO consumption and health problems.

These findings were agreed to by a supermajority of the panel.

Citizen Statement in Support of Measure

11 of 20 panelists took this position:

- Under Proposition 105, food manufacturers would be required to label their foods and beverages with information about GMOs. This would make more informed purchasing decisions.
- State law allows one issue to be on the ballot. Alcohol consumption and foods and beverages are exempt since they are already regulated by state statutes.
- Sixty-four countries around the world require GMO labeling, and 16 of the top 25 countries that import Colorado food products require GMO labeling. Many US food manufacturers already label their foods that contain GMOs for export to these countries.
- Once the rules are in place, the cost of labeling and maintenance, and food safety, is estimated to cost \$130,000 per year.
- Proposition 105 is not a ban on GMOs. It only requires labeling of foods and beverages that contain GMOs.

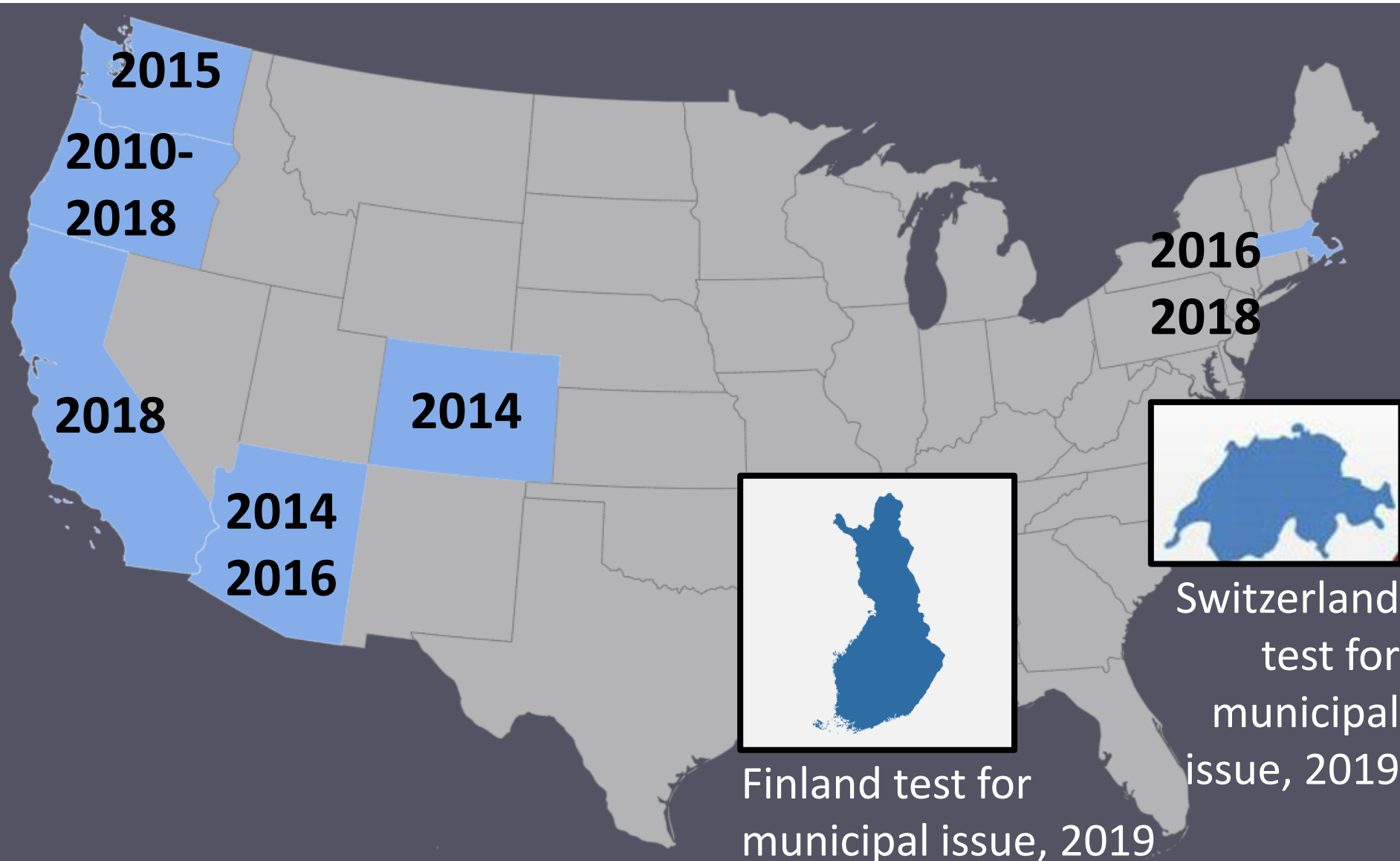
Example of a Citizens' Statement (Colorado Prop. 105, 2014)

- Sixty-four countries around the world require GMO labeling, and 16 of the top 25 countries that import Colorado food products require GMO labeling.
- Approximately 2/3 of the foods and beverages we buy and consume would be exempt. Meat and dairy products would be exempt even if they come from animals raised on GMO feed and grain.

From 2010-2018, there have been seven Oregon CIRs and eight pilot CIRs.

Year	Election	Ballot measure
2010	Oregon General	Tougher sentencing
2010	Oregon General	Medical marijuana
2012	Oregon General	Close tax loophole
2012	Oregon General	Private casinos
2014	Jackson County	Ban GMO seeds
2014	Oregon General	Top-two primary
2014	Oregon General	GMO labels on food
2014	Colorado General	GMO labels on food
2014	Phoenix Muni	Pension reform
2016	Arizona General	Legalize marijuana
2016	Oregon General	Raise gross rcpt. tax
2016	Mass. General	Legalize marijuana
2018	Mass. General	Hospital regulation
2018	Portland Metro Area	Affordable housing bond
2018	California General	Rent control authorization

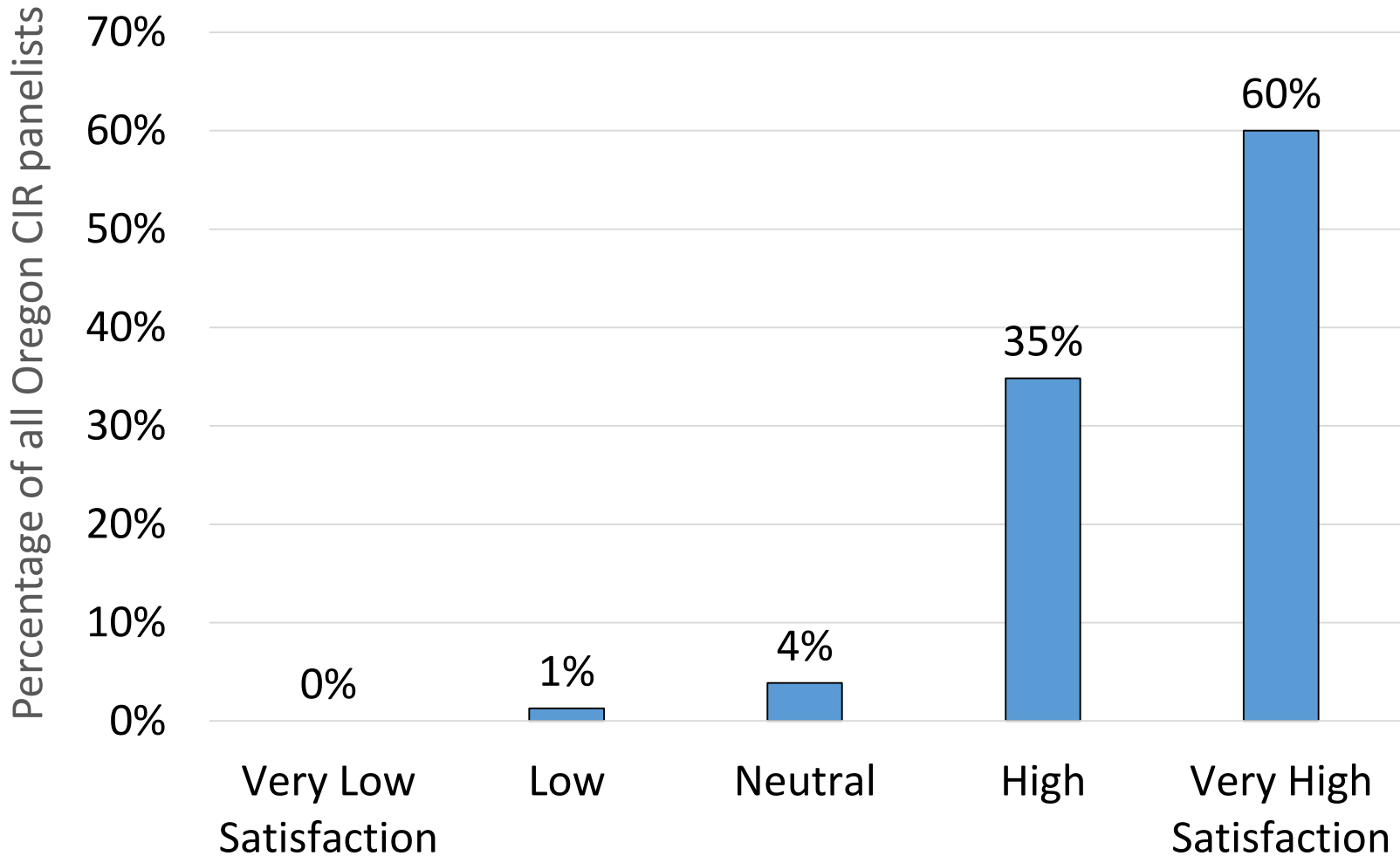
Expansion of the CIR, 2010-2019





Perceptions of the CIR

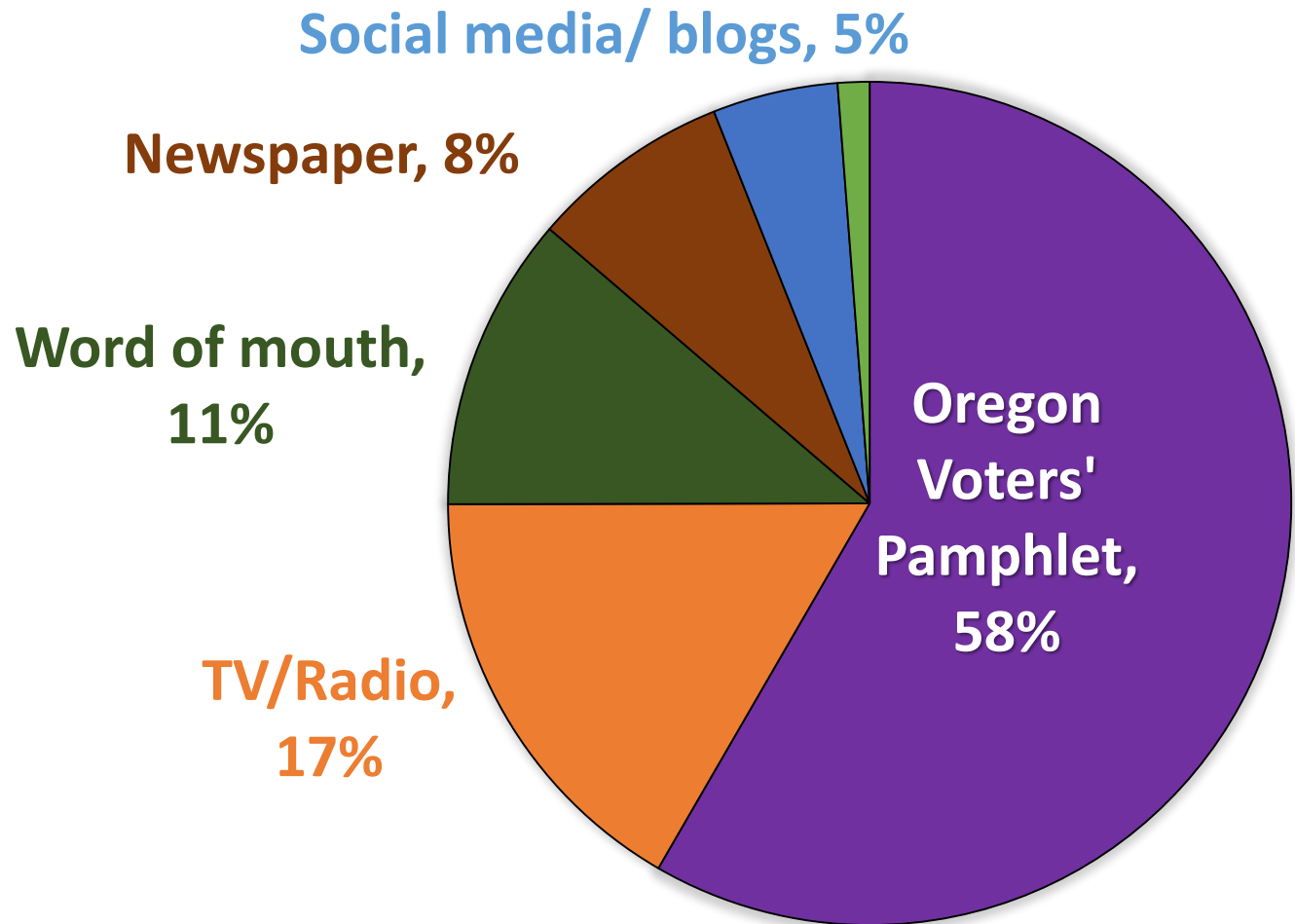
Most citizen panelists report being highly satisfied with the CIR process.



Data pooled from 2010-2014 CIR surveys.

Oregon voters typically learn about the CIR from the Voters' Pamphlet.

*Question:
"Where did
you first learn
of the Oregon
CIR?"*

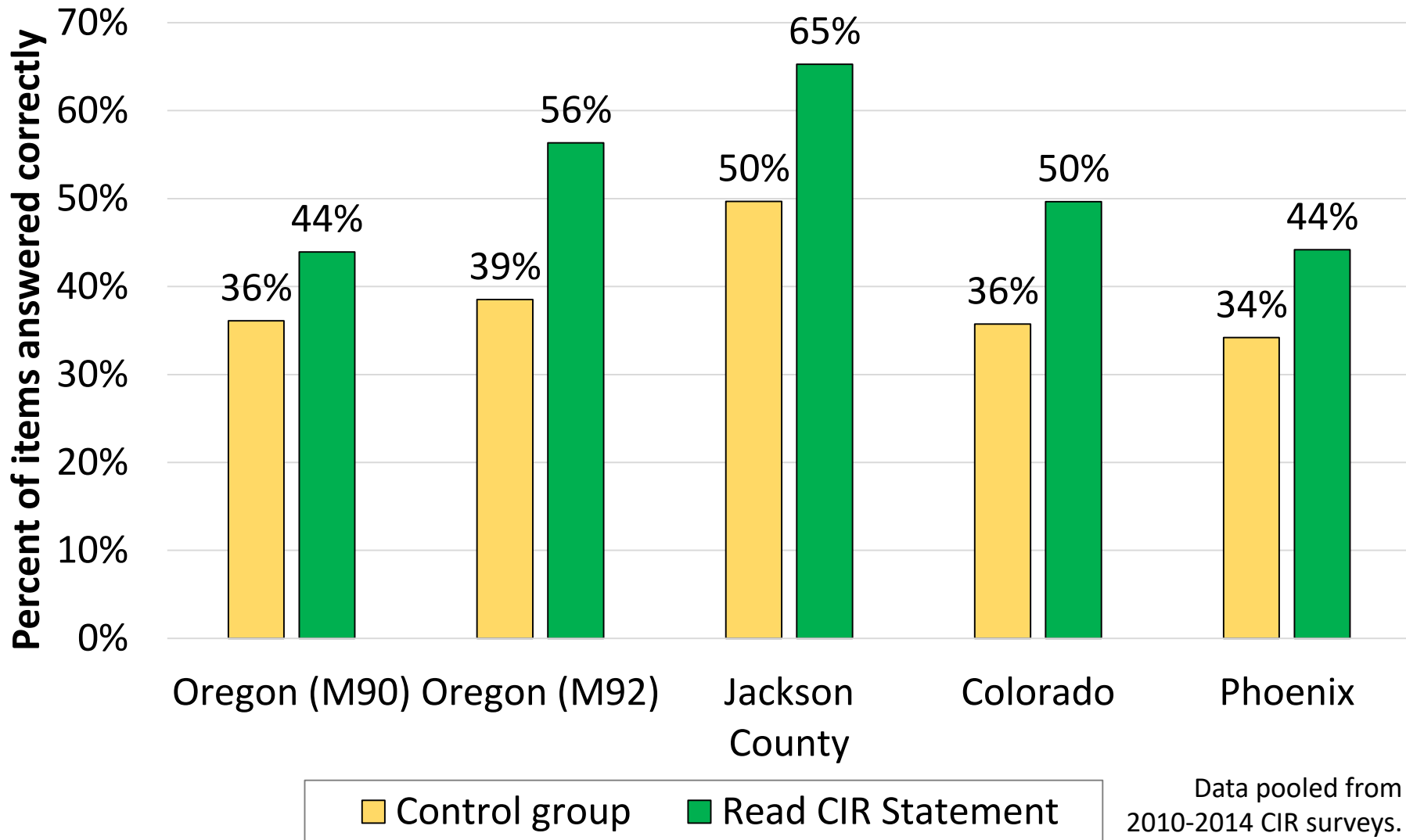


Results are from 247 responses in 2014 telephone survey of likely Oregon voters who stated they were aware of the CIR. AAPOR RR3 response rate was 3%, and COOP3 was 55%, meaning that the majority of eligible respondents reached by phone completed the survey.

Voter Awareness and Use of CIR

- Voter awareness of CIR up from 43% in 2010 to 51% in 2012 and 54% in 2014
- Between 60-75% of voters rate CIR statements as at least “somewhat useful,” with 25-30% rating it as “very useful”
- Trust in the CIR statements is comparable to official government initiative summaries, with 35% trusting CIR “a lot/completely” and 54% trusting it only “a little”

CIR Statements have consistent effects on voters' issue knowledge, even in pilot tests.





Elite perceptions of the CIR

Many legislators support the CIR as a useful reform, but some elites view it as a threat.

- After a **bipartisan majority of the Oregon legislature** voted to establish the CIR test in a 2009 vote, they made it permanent with a vote in 2011.
- After the CIR bill earned **broad co-sponsorship in Massachusetts**, the state legislature is likely to adopt the CIR in 2019.
- A **progressive coalition in Oregon**, led by professional election consultants, has objections to the CIR and the CIR Commission. (Its membership strongly favors CIR.)
- A CIR bill passed through committee review but **never reached a floor vote in the Washington legislature**, *probably* undermined by these Oregon progressives.

Citizens' Initiative Review Research Project



[http://sites.psu.edu/
citizensinitiativereview/](http://sites.psu.edu/citizensinitiativereview/)