

Office of the Governor  
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS  
GOVERNOR



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June 28, 2023

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Honorable Patrick Page Cortez  
Senate President  
Louisiana State Senate  
Post Office Box 94183  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804

RECEIVED

JUN 30 2023

SENATE  
SECRETARY'S  
OFFICE 

RE: Veto of Senate Bill 123 of the 2023 Regular Session

Dear President Cortez:

Please be advised that I have vetoed Senate Bill 123 of the Regular Session of 2023.

The bill as passed does not accomplish its intent and presents potential integrity issues for the recall petition process despite containing worthwhile provisions and the author's efforts to achieve compromise. Senate Bill No. 123 makes several changes to the recall petition process, most at the request of the Louisiana Registrars of Voters Association to make the recall petition process operate more smoothly for registrars of voters. However, a provision in the bill included by the author would shield signatures on the recall petition from public record for 90 days from the first signature.

This provision is problematic for several reasons. First, the author's intent as stated in the Senate House and Governmental Affairs Committee was to allow signatures to be made public "halfway through" the recall petition process. In current law, voters have up to 180 days to add their names to a recall petition before it must be submitted for certification to the registrar of voters, and the bill provides that signatures would be shielded from public record for 90 days after the first signature. While it is true that 90 is half of 180, it is not necessary that those initiating the recall petition use the full 180 days before submitting the petition for certification. For example, should the petition be submitted to the registrar after 45 days, the signatures would be shielded from public record until after the registrar completes certification, not halfway through the process.

Furthermore, the possibility that signatures on a recall petition would be shielded from public record until after certification by a registrar presents potential integrity issues. A voter would have no sure way of knowing if their name had been added fraudulently to a recall petition

Honorable Patrick Page Cortez  
June 28, 2023  
Page Two

until after it had been certified. The bill as passed creates a confusing standard for when recall petition signatures become public record and increases the likelihood of fraud, and, therefore, Senate Bill 123 will not become law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bel Edwards". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops and is positioned above the printed name and title.

John Bel Edwards  
Governor

enclosure

cc: Honorable Clay Schexnayder  
Speaker of the House of Representatives