

Statement by Janalee Tobias

To Honorable Supreme Court Justices,

I've been involved in gathering petitions in the state of Utah for almost 30 years. I've participated in numerous initiative petition gathering efforts to get politicians to listen to citizens by gathering signatures.

Some of my petition efforts include:

- Term Limits
- Limitations on Light Rail
- Preserving open space along the Jordan River
- Requiring employers in Utah to use e-verify for more than one employee
- Referendum on HB477 which made government records off limits to the public

With each initiative petition and referendum effort, denials and stall tactics were employed by government officials in attempts to stop or stall citizen efforts. Many of these cases ended up in court. Many of these court appeals have been heard in this court.

In addition to spending my own time and money on the printing of these referendums and petitions, I've also donated substantial money to the legal effort to get petitions/referendums accepted.

After each successful citizen initiative effort I've been involved with, the Utah State Legislature has made it more difficult and more expensive for citizens to make their voices heard. And most times, they are totally overturned or rewritten.

Not only does the Utah Legislature and city and council government bodies override petitions and referendums, they also overturn the vote of the people.

What are the options for the voice of the people to be heard when the Utah Legislature continues to ignore the wishes of the people?

For example:

In the early 1990s, the people voted against building light rail in Salt Lake County. The state and UTA pushed it through anyway. In 2000, UTA placed a vote on the ballot, without gathering even one signature, to increase sales tax for UTA. The rail companies and other powerful special interests funneled close to a half-million dollars over the citizens' few thousand dollars to oppose this tax increase. The tax increase won. Last year in 2017, the people voted in four counties against a tax increase by the UTA. The Utah Legislature passed a law allowing cities to bypass the will of the people and implement the tax increase.

The Utah Legislature passes hundreds of new bills every year, and some of those bills are hundreds of pages long. And they throw a fit when the citizens are desperate to get tax relief or other issues that will help them by saying that the citizens don't know how to make law. I believe I speak for many others when I say that the legislature doesn't always make good laws.

I have cited just a few examples of government quashing the right of the citizens of the state of Utah to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

The people of Utah voted for Proposition 2 with several hundred thousand votes. It is a blatant disregard for the thousands and thousands of volunteer hours and personal money from petition organizers and other small donations from struggling taxpayers who worked hard to educate the people about Prop 2.

That Prop 2 was in effect for two weekend days before the Utah Legislature overturned it is unbelievably arrogant and flies in the face of "government by the people."

The people could argue that referendums/initiative petitions are better-written, and certainly better-explained, than most bills because of the almost-impossible number of signatures that need to be gathered. So that's over a hundred thousand people who are educated about a new law to be passed before it even gets voted on.

The legislature passes hundreds of new laws every year and many of these laws are crammed through on the final hour of the session without even any debate.

I've never been paid for any signatures I've collected. I've collected thousands of signatures for causes that I believe in. These are good issues I've been involved with that protect citizens from abuse of power, excessive taxation, protect government transparency, and even protect open space. I have skin in the game of initiative petitions and referendums. I must speak out on this issue. That's why I have filed pro se in this lawsuit by joining with other citizens who just want a chance for our votes to really count and restore Prop 2 as voted on by the people in the state of Utah.

Thank you.

Signature: Janalee Tobias Date: March 23, 2019
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