



CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR GRAY DAVIS FACES RECALL VOTE

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Gray Davis faces a historic test this October, when the voters of California decide whether to fire the governor they elected less than a year ago.

On October 7, California voters will go the polls to vote on whether to replace their existing governor, Democrat Gray Davis.

The vote, known as a recall, will be the first in California history. It will also be only the second time in U.S. history that a governor faces removal from office.

What is a recall?

A recall is a process in which voters can remove a public official from office before his or her term expires. In Davis' case, his Republican opponents gathered the signatures of over 1.6 million Californians, almost double the 897,158 signatures required, in order to trigger the recall vote.

By law, the election must occur between 60 and 80 days from when the signatures are officially counted.

Californians have previously tried 31 times to mount a recall of a governor, but never succeeded in getting the signatures needed to force a vote.

On October 7, voters will be asked first to vote yes or no to Davis' removal. They will also be able to vote from a list of candidates vying to replace him. If a majority of the voters opt to oust Davis, the candidate with the most votes would become governor the next day.

Davis supporters have criticized the process, citing of the high cost of the recall. The vote could cost taxpayers as much as \$35 million, with a majority of the money going toward printing and counting the ballots and producing a voter information guide for California's 11 million households.

Already, Davis supporters have tried to stop the vote through court challenges. One group, Taxpayers Against the Governor's Recall, has filed a petition charging that the signature gatherers hired by Davis' Republican opponents were not registered voters.

Who will replace Davis?

Voters first elected Davis in 1998 and re-elected him last November for a second four-year term. Before and after his election, Davis faced criticism for his handling of a massive energy crisis in 2000 and 2001, and for his management of the state's budget, which faces a crippling \$38 billion deficit this year.

Among the Republicans hoping to replace Davis is U.S. Rep. Darrell Issa, a conservative California congressman, who financed the multi-million dollar recall campaign. Issa has accused Davis of being the worst governor in California.

Actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, star of the Terminator movies, was considering running for Davis's seat, but a spokesman said Tuesday that the Republican supporter would likely not become a candidate due to the pressure it would put on his family.

Davis has vowed to "fight like a Bengal tiger" to keep his position.

In a show of support for Davis, no Democrats have said they will run against him in the recall.

The history of recalls

Prior to Davis' troubles only one other U.S. governor has faced a recall. In 1921 voters recalled North Dakota Gov. Lynn J. Frazier, after his state's economy faltered following World War I and his party's socialist policies became unpopular.

Davis and his supporters will now begin a massive campaign to win over voters before the October election. Bill Clinton, along with other high profile democrats, is expected to speak out on Davis' behalf.

By Kristina Nwazota, Online NewsHour

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