## Overview

All 50 states have added amendments to their constitutions.

Four Methods of Amending State Constitutions:
- a. through state legislatures
- b. popular initiative
- c. constitutional convention
- d. constitutional commission

## Proposal

### State Legislatures

All state legislatures can propose amendments. It is the most common method—92% of all amendments are proposed this way.
- a. Seventeen states require a simple majority of both houses for a proposal.
- b. Eighteen states require a 2/3 majority of both houses for a proposal.
- c. Nine states require 3/5 vote of the legislature.
- d. Six states require that amendments be voted on in 2 different sessions of the legislature before the proposal is official.

### Popular Initiative

Seventeen states allow citizens to propose amendments through popular initiative.

### Constitutional Conventions

Constitutional conventions are another form of proposing amendments. At conventions, delegates—usually elected by popular vote—gather to vote on a proposal for an amendment. Rhode Island had such a convention in 1986.

### Constitutional Commissions

A constitutional commission is a group of appointed experts who examine the constitution and make recommendations for changes. However, few commissions result in any change. In 1988, only one of 77 recommendations was referred to voters for approval.

## Ratification

### Popular Vote

All states except Delaware* require ratification by popular vote.
- a. Forty-four states require a simple majority of those who voted on the amendment.
- b. Three require a simple majority of voters who voted in the election.
- c. Illinois requires a majority of all voters or 2/3 of all those who voted on the amendments.
- d. New Hampshire requires a 2/3 majority of all voters.

*Delaware requires 2 consecutive sessions of the state legislature to ratify an amendment.

### Did You Know?

Once an amendment is on the ballot, it will likely be approved. States vote to approve 70% of the amendments that make it onto the popular ballot.