

Y13 Politics Term 1 — US Representative Democracy

Direct Democracy in the USA: Help or Hinder progress?

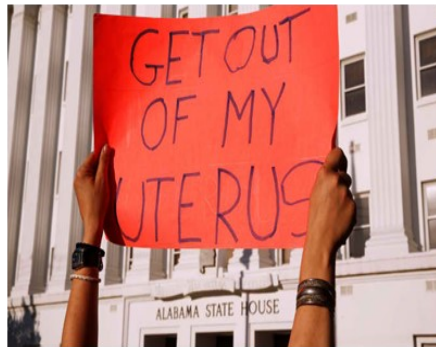
Help US direct democracy?



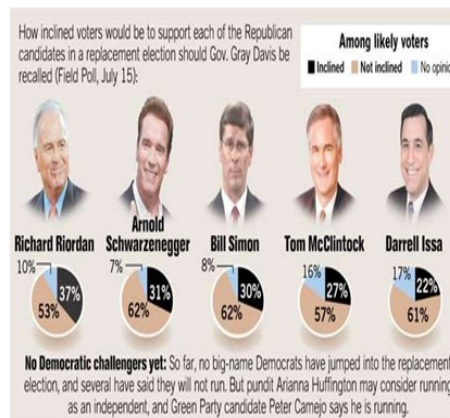
- California is the largest high profile state (55 ECVs) which frequently makes use of **ballot initiatives and/or propositions**.
- The Federal System, as bestowed by the 55 Founding Father's, is governed by state law. Montesquieu, the key thinker and ideologue of Federalism, wished the separation of powers to be promulgated at a local level – checking the power of Washington DC.
- It significantly enhances the chances of the local electorate to participate in political matters, make dramatic reforms, and alter the state of US Federalism.
- The system is enormously popular. In 2016, 162 measures in 35 states were voted on, but not necessarily enacted.
- The 3 core areas of US Direct Democracy are ballot initiatives, referenda and recall elections.
- The US states which promulgate local initiatives (Florida, Arizona, California, Oregon) are often described as **'legislative laboratories'**.

Help or hinder Federal States?

The Deep South states have in 2019 banned regional abortions here up to 5 weeks. This was a referendum introduced by mostly male legislators. It challenges Roe v Wade 1973 which legalised national abortions up to 24 weeks.

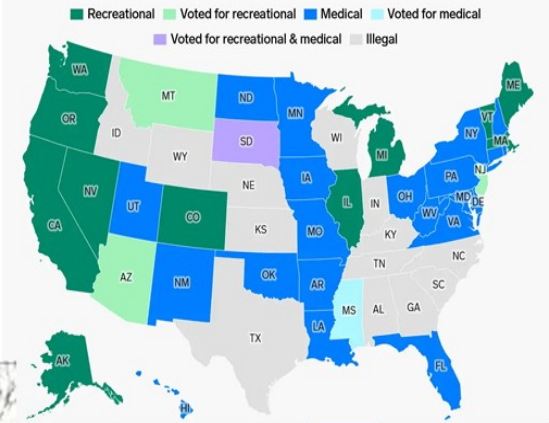


Fiona Onasanya, Labour MP for Peterborough, was successfully recalled by her constituents and removed from office in 2018. She lied about attempting to swap 3 speeding points to her husbands Driving Licence in order to avoid an automatic ban. Onasanya also denied she was driving the car. She was already on 9 points. The Peterborough constituents smelt the flagrant corruption and abuse of power here and acted collectively.



Gray Davis, Governor of California in 2003, was successfully recalled and lost the recall vote against Arnold Swarzenegger – his Republican successor. Many state officials have faced a public vote of discontent/apathy/deep grievances/malfesance in public office. It takes 790,000 signatures to recall the Governor of Michigan. Scott Walker of Wisconsin was the last Governor to be unsuccessfully recalled in 2012.

States where cannabis is legal



Over 8 states in 2016 in the dark and light shades of green voted to legalise cannabis/marijuana for both recreational and medicinal reasons. Even though marijuana is decriminalised in the medical sphere in Britain, it's still illegal to use it publicly for recreational reasons. **These were localised, bottom up citizens' propositions/initiatives.**