

← **OPEN** for a side-by-side comparison highlighting benefits of the Pittsburgh Open Government Amendment.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Who?** You(?) and the other city residents who want good government in Pittsburgh and will be signing the official referendum initiative petition.

**What?** Amending the City Charter is the only way to assure real reform that politicians can't undo. The first step is to collect over 10,000 signatures and put a referendum question on the fall ballot.

**Where?** The City of Pittsburgh, but you can live anywhere and still help. The amendment can also be a model that other municipalities and other levels of government, but first we need to do it here.

**When?** Starting now, we need to know who will sign the official petition before the petitioning period begins.

**Why?** We will have only 7 weeks to collect the over 10,000 signatures needed. We can only succeed if you and enough others tell us in advance that you're willing to sign so an official petition can be brought to you.

**How?** You submit your contact information. After verification, we'll add your name to a list of people living near you who also want to sign. Then a volunteer (possibly you or one of your neighbors) can easily collect those signatures without any fuss.

*Your signature can put the*  
**Open Government Amendment**  
*on the election ballot!*

# Open Government equals Good Government

## The Open Government Amendment:

- ✓ puts all publicly accessible City records online
- ✓ enables you to **watch** proceedings; **participate & comment** in public meetings via the Internet
- ✓ requires you **be told** what your government is planning to do before they do it
- ✓ you can sign up to **be notified** about pending city actions affecting any matters of concern to you
- ✓ gives citizens a real opportunity to **investigate, discuss, and make comment**
- ✓ creates a *Citizen Advisory Panel* (CAP):
  - Open membership, no size limit; virtually any person can join anytime & begin having a say
  - Proposed laws must be explained & questions answered before going to Council
  - Can investigate issues, hold hearings, develop proposals & make presentations which Council and the Mayor must attend
  - Can educate & inform the public about City government affairs and public concerns

To see the full text & get more information:



(412) 532-8338

→ *Want to know what's going on in your community?*

→ *Want to be told before the City does anything affecting you or your interests?*

→ *Do you want City officials to hear your concerns before decisions are made?*



*Now with open government all the talk on Grant Street ...*

**Will you be among the 2% of Pittsburghers whose signatures put a referendum on the election ballot for:**

**Pittsburgh's  
Open  
Government  
Amendment?**

# Status Quo vs. Open Government

Currently		Under the Amendment
✗ The new Open Data Ordinance is a start but more still needs to be made accessible	→	✓ Makes more usable information available online & through the local library
✗ Most meetings are virtually unattendable because of time, location, or unseen notices	→	✓ All meetings which are “public” by law must be webcast with public comment online
✗ Public notice given for limited items and buried in the legal notices	→	✓ More public notice; all notices posted online; notice sent to individuals who request it
✗ Administrative matters often put into effect without public knowledge or input	→	✓ Advance notice of administrative matters put online and sent to those who request it
✗ Proposed legislation often hidden behind obscure or misleading titles and “captions”	→	✓ All legislation must be explained & citizen questions answered before it is introduced
✗ Claim of “proprietary information” often used to hide information from the public	→	✓ Eliminates numerous loopholes and makes it extremely difficult to hide information
✗ Information often unavailable for hearings	→	✓ Full disclosure of information when hearings are first scheduled and advertised
✗ Public comment limited to 3 minutes	→	✓ Full organized presentations possible
✗ Council hearings and public comment are often poorly attended by Council members	→	✓ A quorum (majority) of Council must attend its hearings, comment, presentations to it, etc.
✗ No effective means for proactive public participation in the City’s governance	→	✓ A public participation body is established to facilitate active citizen involvement
✗ Practically impossible for individuals and citizen groups to uncover back room deals and/or disclose what’s really going on	→	✓ Strong framework for citizen access to the inside workings of City government; ability to review matters and inform the public
✗ New candidates for public office come from the party machine; incumbent politicians buy favor using their office as an election tool	→	✓ Average citizens can learn how government operates, prove their proficiency with the issues, and build support to run for office
✗ Elected officials tend to give special access to large campaign contributors; citizen input often gets short shrift	→	✓ Council and the administration are held accountable and must give their full attention to hear and consider citizen input

**OpenPittsburgh.Org**

**(412) 532-8338**

## Referendum Ballot Question: \*

**S**hall Pittsburgh's Charter be amended to delete Article 6: Community Advisory Boards (voided, Dec. 31, 2000) and substitute Article 6: Open Government, providing greater public disclosure; requiring public information, notices, and meetings be Internet accessible; setting applicable standards; creating a selectable notification process; and establishing an open membership Citizen Advisory Panel to which pending legislative and administrative actions must be explained and through which citizens can develop and provide information and comment before final approval?

\* A print copy of the full amendment is available upon request. The full text is also online at: [OpenPgh.Org](http://OpenPgh.Org)

## 3 Things you can do

**Sign the petition** – Please take a moment to tell us you want to sign to put the Open Government Amendment on the election ballot.

**Go online to: [OpenPgh.Org](http://OpenPgh.Org)**

**Call or text: (412) 532-8338**

**Volunteer** – From spreading the word to circulating petitions and a number of other volunteer activities, there's plenty to do to help make the Amendment a reality. Contact us to get involved.

**Donate** – We've been given a donation challenge that can match your contribution 4 to 1. In other words:

you give \$100 >>> we get \$500

you give \$50 >>> we get \$250

you give \$20 >>> we get \$100