

Referendum

**By Reg P. Wydeven
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Last week, thankfully, the 2010 election took place. New faces are now in office in our state and federal government. Hopefully the fresh blood will bring about change and make our country better. More importantly, the political ads are over.

Like most elections, not only did we just vote for people, we also voted for propositions. Here in Wisconsin, we voted on whether to allow government officials to use money from the state transportation fund to use in other projects. The referendum, which passed in all 53 counties in which it was on the ballot, amended the state constitution to prevent the use of these funds that are generated by vehicle registration and fuel taxes.

The measure came about after departing Gov. Jim Doyle transferred a total of \$1.3 billion from the transportation fund to the general fund in three biennial budgets. The referendum was typical of many issues voted on by other states, such as taxes, campaign reform and other benign matters. Some states, however, decided on much more interesting topics.

One of the most publicized referendums was California's Proposition 19, which sought to legalize marijuana. The proposal, officially titled the "Regulate, Control and Tax Cannabis Act," would have made it legal for adults age 21 and over to possess up to one ounce of marijuana, grow it in small private plots and even consume it in nonpublic places, provided no children were present. The RCTC Act would have also allowed local governments to permit the commercial cultivation of marijuana and the sale and use of marijuana at licensed establishments.

Needless to say, the measure did not pass, and supporters of the proposition saw their hopes go up in smoke. California residents came out in droves to voting joints to oppose the referendum, claiming they were able to weed out the propaganda from the truth. In an ironically comedic twist, experts believe the measure failed because of low turnout from younger voters, who were presumably slacking. Apparently these voters lost their "Yes We Can-nabis" attitude. Supporters of the proposal still say their efforts haven't gone to pot, as they expect a similar referendum to be on the 2012 ballot.

Meanwhile, voters in the western Massachusetts city of Pittsfield voted on a referendum that would have urged state representatives to introduce legislation amending the state's nudity definition. If passed, females of any age would have been allowed to be exposed from the waist up in public places where males were also allowed to be topless.

Like the pot-heads in California, supporters of the Pittsfield proposition also lost their shirts at the polls. The measure was voted down by about seventy percent of the voters, which apparently caused the opposition to blow their tops.

Finally, Denver's ballot contained a proposal to establish a commission for the purpose of tracking extraterrestrials. Residents would also be allowed to post sightings on the city's webpage. Jeff Peckman, the man who introduced the measure, claims the government is currently tracking extraterrestrial sightings but not making their findings public.

Voters resoundingly voted down the measure, feeling the proposition was just too out of this world. Experts speculated, however, if the results would have been different had non-resident aliens been allowed to vote.

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