

Opinion: Nev. wants to reform initiative process

By Steve Sebelius, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Political language, Orwell said, is designed to make lies sound truthful. But sometimes, even the best political wordsmith can't get the job done.



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Take Senate Bill 434, a bill aimed at reforming the initiative petition process. It passed out of the state Senate on a 12-9 vote with bipartisan opposition on Friday.

The legislative bill drafter gamely tries to assert that the Legislature has enacted provisions intended to “facilitate the efficiency, veracity and clarity” of petitions laid before the voters. Of course, the rules are intended to have the opposite effect, being cumbersome burdens to the right of the people to amend their constitution or state law books.

(It should be noted initiative petitions and constitutional amendments are not, strictly speaking, examples of the First Amendment right of the people to petition their government for the redress of grievances. Rather, initiatives are the people acting directly in their legislative capacity.)

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