

The Manitoba Municipal Recall Act

PREAMBLE

Whereas the foundation of municipal governance in Manitoba rests upon the principles of democracy, transparency, accountability, and respect for the public voice;
And whereas elected municipal officials serve not only as representatives of their constituents, but also as stewards of public trust, responsible for acting with integrity, fairness, and in accordance with both the Municipal Act and broader democratic expectations;

- Abuse of legal authority, where officials filed criminal complaints later dismissed as meritless, used not to protect public interest, but to intimidate, silence, or vilify engaged citizens and advocacy groups;
- Misinformation and inflammatory rhetoric, where officials publicly labeled dissenting voices as "thugs," "mobs," or agents of disruption—despite no such evidence—eroding civic trust and corrupting dialogue;
- Disrespect for public input, with council meetings reduced to adversarial scenes, often characterized by the very officials who disrupted their integrity, dismissing citizen concerns as "mob rule" or "gong shows";
- Weaponization of local media, deployed for political theatrics and misrepresentation rather than public service, further dividing communities and isolating whistleblowers;
- Hostility toward constitutional and legal professionals, especially those offering pro bono guidance to improve transparency and legal compliance—only to be ignored, undermined, or defamed;

And whereas such conduct, coupled with the absence of meaningful recall mechanisms, has contributed to a growing democratic deficit, where residents are left without recourse when officials act contrary to law, ethics, or their public mandate;

Now therefore, the Manitoba Municipal Recall Act is introduced to:

- Affirm that power ultimately resides with the people, and that municipal governance must remain responsive throughout an elected term, not merely at the ballot box;
- Provide a clear and structured mechanism for constituents to seek the recall and removal of elected officials who have demonstrated gross misconduct, neglect of duty, or breaches of public trust;

- Restore community faith in municipal institutions by promoting a culture of accountability, fairness, and participatory democracy;
- Reduce the overreliance on the Manitoba Municipal Board as a backstop for dysfunctional councils—ensuring that local governments resolve issues transparently and locally, with residents as their first accountability line;
- Encourage collaborative and ethical leadership across Manitoba by ensuring that those in office remain continuously accountable to the communities they serve.

By enacting this legislation, Manitoba joins jurisdictions such as British Columbia and Alberta, who have recognized that citizen-initiated recall is not destabilizing, but democratizing—an instrument of last resort, carefully structured to prevent abuse, but strong enough to correct it.

The Manitoba Municipal Recall Act is therefore a measured, non-partisan, and grassroots reform. It gives citizens a remedy when leadership fails, and reaffirms that public office is a privilege contingent on public trust.

PART I – PURPOSE AND INTERPRETATION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Act is to establish a legal process through which electors may petition for the recall of a municipal elected official in the Province of Manitoba, thereby promoting accountability, transparency, and trust in local governance.

2. Definitions

- "Chief Electoral Officer" means the officer designated to oversee recall proceedings.
- "Council" means the municipal council to which the elected official belongs.
- "Elector" means a resident eligible to vote in the applicable municipal election.
- "Recall petition" means a formally submitted document requesting the removal of a municipal elected official, in accordance with the requirements of this Act.
- "Runoff confirmation vote" means a vote to confirm majority public support for recall, following successful petition verification.

PART II – ELIGIBILITY AND INITIATION

3. Eligible Officials

A municipal elected official may be subject to recall under this Act after having served 12 months of their term, and not within the final 6 months before the next general municipal election.

4. Initiation of Recall Petition

(1) A recall process may be initiated by any elector residing in the same municipality or ward.

(2) The initiator must register their intent with the Chief Electoral Officer and submit a refundable administrative fee of \$200.

5. Pre-Petition Threshold

Before a formal petition is circulated, a digital or physical intake must demonstrate support from at least 5% of eligible voters within the relevant jurisdiction — being the ward for a ward-based councilors, or the municipality as a whole for officials elected at-large.

PART III – PETITION REQUIREMENTS

6. Signature Threshold

A valid recall petition must collect signatures from at least 15% of eligible electors, being electors of the ward for a ward councilor, or of the municipality as a whole for officials elected at-large, including councilor's-at-large, in the case of a lead councilor, the reeve, or the mayor.

7. Time Limit

Petitioners shall have 60 days from the date of registration to collect and submit valid signatures.

8. Signature Verification

(1) The Chief Electoral Officer shall verify submitted signatures within 30 days.

(2) Digital and physical signatures may be accepted, provided identity and residency are verified.

PART IV – RUNOFF CONFIRMATION AND RECALL VOTE

9. Runoff Confirmation Vote

- (1) If a petition is deemed valid, a runoff-style confirmation vote must be held within 60 to 90 days.
- (2) To be valid, a minimum of 25% of eligible electors must participate in the runoff confirmation vote, being electors of the ward in the case of a ward councilor, or of the municipality as a whole in the case of a lead councilor, the reeve, or the mayor.

10. Outcome and By-election

- (1) If a majority of valid votes are cast in favour of recall, the official shall be removed from office immediately.
- (2) A by-election shall be scheduled within 45 days.
- (3) The recalled official shall be disqualified from contesting the immediate by-election.

PART V – OVERSIGHT AND CAMPAIGN CONDUCT

11. Oversight and Appeals

A non-partisan Electoral Oversight Committee shall manage the recall process, including appeals, public notices, and dispute resolution.

12. Campaign Finance and Advertising

- (1) All campaign participants and third-party advertisers must register with the Oversight Committee.
- (2) Individual donations are capped at \$1,000; group donations at \$5,000.
- (3) Anonymous donations exceeding \$100 are prohibited.

13. Offences and Penalties

- (1) Harassment, coercion, bribery, identity fraud, or misinformation related to a recall process is an offence.
- (2) Conviction may result in fines up to \$10,000 and/or disqualification from holding public office for up to five years.

PART VI – GENERAL PROVISIONS

14. Annual Budget Provisions