

# Module 10: State and Local Government

## Topic 2 Content: Progressive Case Study

### Introduction



**Glover Mint:** On today's episode, Demi Tracy will examine a historical example of citizens influencing public policy in the local and state governments. Take it away, Demi.

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### Case Study



**Demi Tracy:** Thanks, Glover. In order to illustrate how average citizens are able to influence the public policy of their communities and states, I am going to discuss some aspects of the American Progressive Movement.

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### Progressive Movement



**Demi Tracy:** The Progressive Movement refers to the period of time between 1890 and 1917. During these years in American History, many reforms occurred that were born out of the efforts of average citizens. In order to change public policy, these reformers, known as “progressives,” knew that they must remove corrupt politicians and big business from the state and local governments.

The Progressives achieved much of their early success by gaining control of city governments. Corrupt politicians were exposed to the public and voted out of office. Progressive candidates were elected to various positions and began to institute progressive public policies, like an eight-hour work day and a minimum wage.

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#### Progressive Movement II

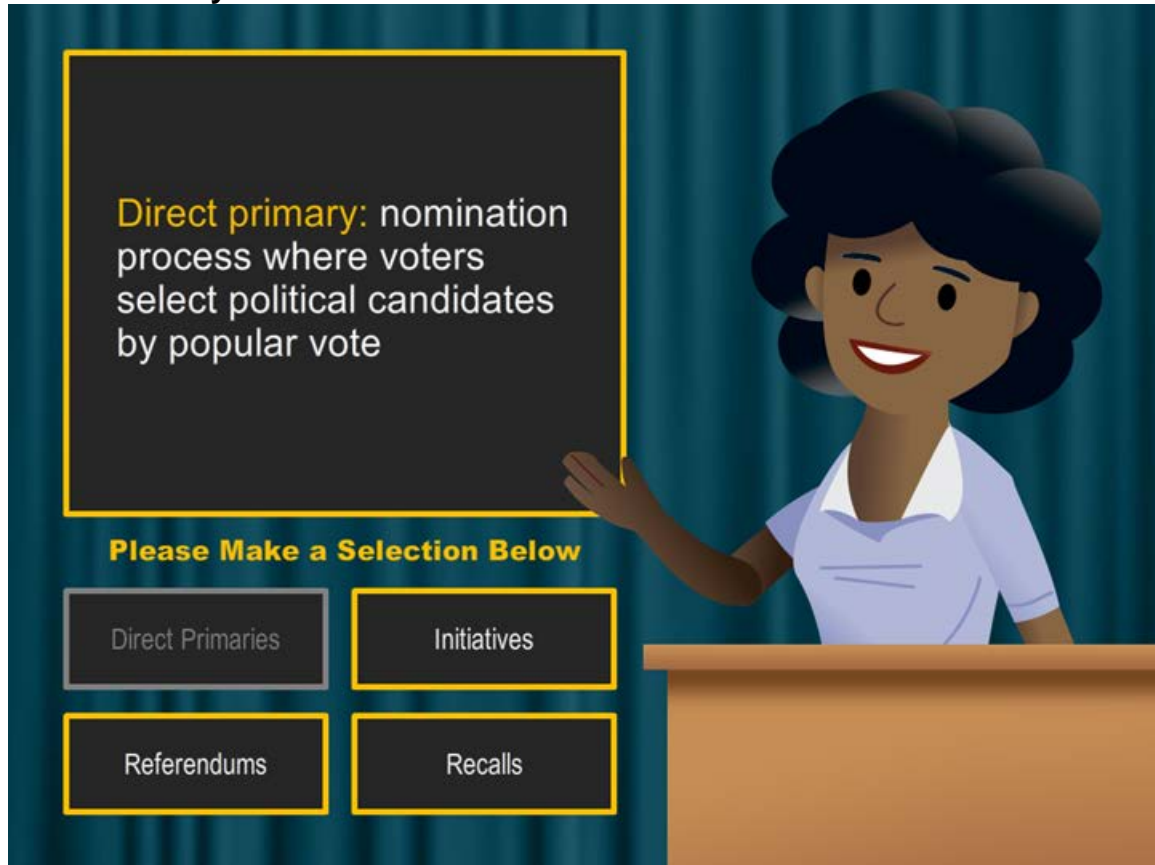


**Demi Tracy:** After these successes in local government, the Progressives focused their attention on the state governments. In addition to winning seats in the state government, including governorships in a few states, the Progressives attempted to institute democratic reforms. This was done through the use of the direct primaries, initiatives, referendums, and recalls.

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#### Direct Primary



**Direct primary:** nomination process where voters select political candidates by popular vote

**Please Make a Selection Below**

Direct Primaries	Initiatives
Referendums	Recalls

The illustration shows a woman with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a light blue shirt, standing behind a wooden podium. She is pointing towards a large black board with a yellow border. The board contains the text 'Direct primary: nomination process where voters select political candidates by popular vote'. Below the board, there are four buttons with yellow borders: 'Direct Primaries', 'Initiatives', 'Referendums', and 'Recalls'. The background is a dark blue curtain.

**Demi Tracy:** As we have discussed in other episodes, the direct primary is the nomination method where voters select political candidates by popular vote. Direct primaries prevented corrupt party bosses from nominating candidates for office.

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#### Initiative

**Initiative:** process that permits citizens to propose laws to their state and local government

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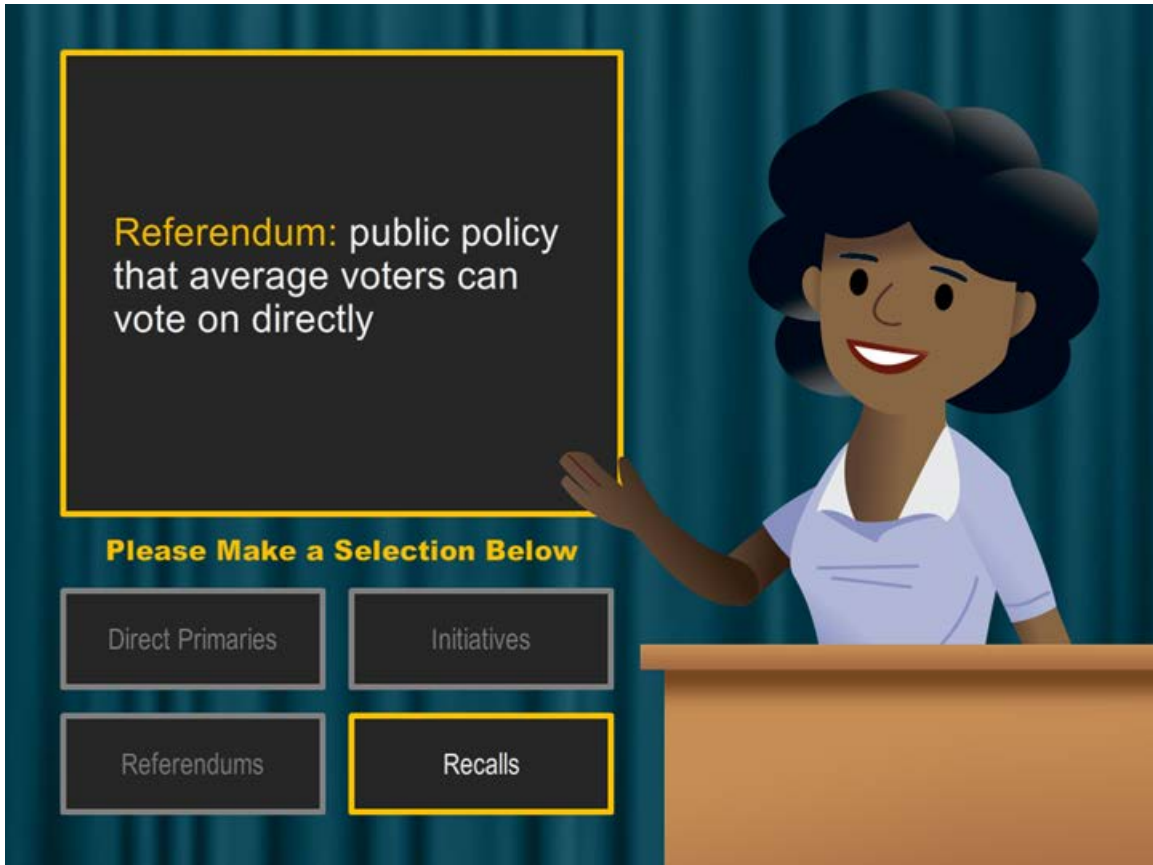
Direct Primaries	Initiatives
Referendums	Recalls

**Demi Tracy:** An initiative is a process that permits citizens to propose laws to their state and local governments. The process varies depending on the government, but it usually requires a certain number of signatures of registered voters before it is placed on the ballot for a vote.

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#### Referendum



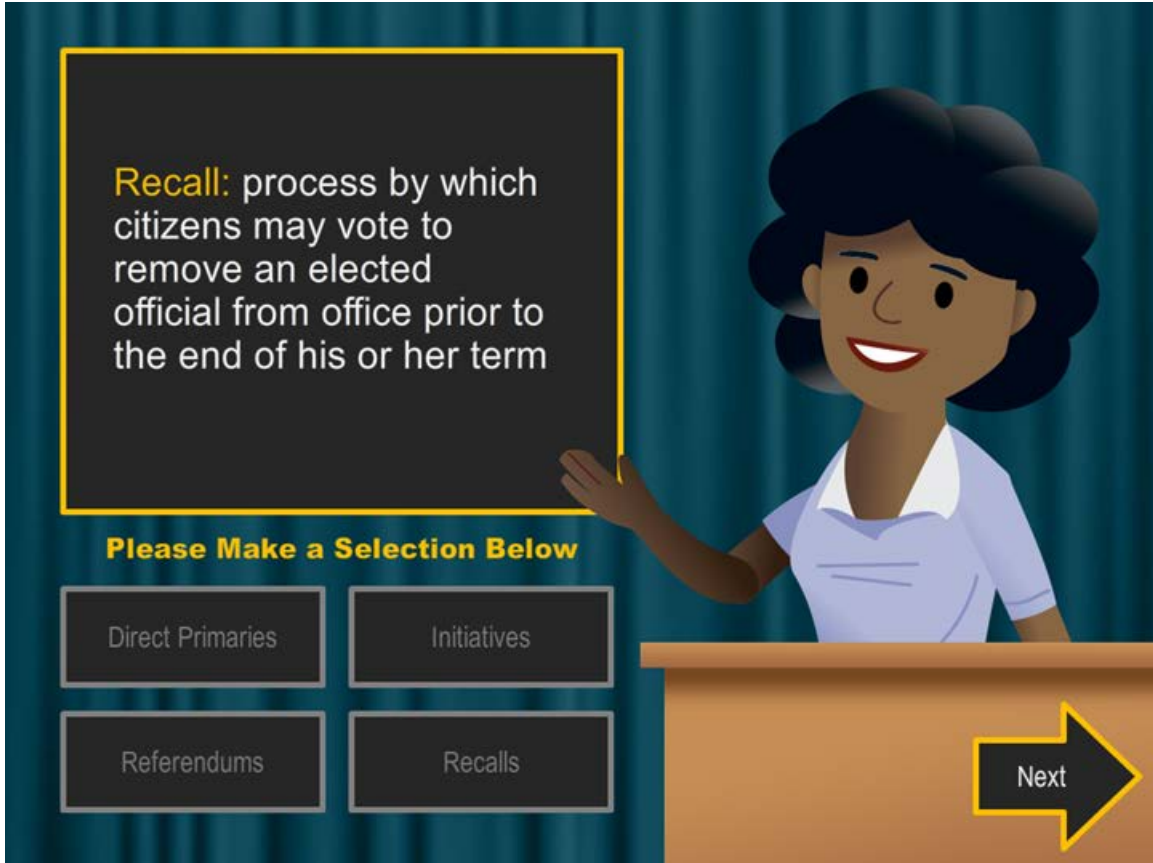
The illustration shows a woman with dark skin and curly hair, wearing a light blue shirt, standing behind a wooden podium. She is pointing to a large black rectangular box with a yellow border. Inside the box, the text reads: "Referendum: public policy that average voters can vote on directly". Below the box, the text "Please Make a Selection Below" is written in yellow. Underneath this text are four buttons: "Direct Primaries", "Initiatives", "Referendums", and "Recalls". The "Recalls" button is highlighted with a yellow border.

**Demi Tracy:** A referendum is public policy that average voters can vote on directly. If the legislative body passes a law, the citizens of the community or state vote on whether or not the law goes into effect.

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#### Recall



**Recall:** process by which citizens may vote to remove an elected official from office prior to the end of his or her term

**Please Make a Selection Below**

Direct Primaries      Initiatives

Referendums      Recalls

Next

**Demi Tracy:** The recall is a process by which citizens may vote to remove an elected official from office prior to the end of his or her term. This is sometimes referred to as a vote of no confidence, meaning the voters no longer believe the elected official is performing his or her duties appropriately.



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#### Accomplishments of the Progressive Movement

## Accomplishments of the Progressive Movement



- The Seventeenth Amendment allowed citizens to vote for U.S. Senators directly.
- The Nineteenth Amendment granted women's suffrage.
- President Roosevelt instituted reforms in the national government, based on progressive ideals.
- These changes in public policy were a direct result of victories at the state and local levels of government.

**Demi Tracy:** The Seventeenth Amendment, which allowed citizens to vote for U.S. senators directly, was a victory of the Progressive Movement, as was the Nineteenth Amendment, which guaranteed women's suffrage. President Theodore Roosevelt instituted social, economic, and political reforms in the national government, based on progressive ideals. Roosevelt even ran for a third term as president under the Progressive Party in 1912. These national changes in public policy were a direct result of changes in public policy at the state level, and the victories at the state level began in local city governments across the nation.

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Ending of Episode



**Glover Mint:** The Progressive Movement is only one example of citizens influencing public policy at the state and local levels. Many of the democratic reforms instituted by the Progressives, like initiatives, referendums, and recalls, continue to be used to influence state and local public policy.