

## The System of Initiative in the Philippine Setting

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The Article examines the system of initiative introduced by the 1987 Constitution. Significantly, while the 1935 and 1973 Constitutions provided for how amendments to the Constitution should be undertaken, they both contained no provisions for means by which the people could directly propose changes to the Constitution or propose laws or amendments thereto. Considered its strong point, the system of initiative “provides a mechanism which is very responsive to the sentiments of the people.” It serves as an effective check in case Congress is unduly controlled by the President or is oblivious to the demands of the people. Meanwhile, it is criticized because of the fear that it would result in frequent amendments to the Constitution, which of course may require the expenditure of public funds, and ultimately, impoverishment of the government. The Author then discusses the experience of the United States in employing the same system and observes that the same did not result in frivolous legislation, as feared, but instead worked as a safety valve. In fine, the Author remarks that while the system of initiative may produce bad legislation results, this is outweighed by the more pressing need to check on an otherwise unresponsive and partial legislative body.