

# Let the voters decide

Voters in Orange County now have a chance to choose whether their school board will be appointed or directly elected.

Earlier this year, the General Assembly passed a bill allowing localities to put the issue of elected school boards up for referendum in November.

The referendum, however, is not automatic. The General Assembly required that at least 10 percent of the registered voters in the locality to sign a petition asking for the question to be put on the local ballot.

## Our Opinion

The rules for getting the question on the ballot in Orange County are simple.

A petition asking for the referendum must be filed with the Orange County Circuit Court by August 5. The petition must contain the names, addresses, and signatures of at least 921 registered Orange County voters.

The question would be this:

"Shall the method of selecting the school board members be changed from appointment by the school board selection commission to direct election?"

The question does not allow elected school boards any power to levy taxes. The current method of making the budget would remain unchanged.

If the voters of Orange County approve the question, the first school board election would be in November of 1995.

If the voters of Orange County reject the question, the issue cannot be put on the ballot again until 1996.

The voters of Orange County deserve a chance to decide whether to elect their school boards. If they like the way things are done now, they can reject the question. If they don't like the way things are, they can support elected school boards.

Either way, the matter is left where it belongs -- in the hands of the people.

Rules and sample petitions are available through the State Board of Elections at 200 North 9th Street, Room 101, Richmond, VA 23219-3497. The telephone number is (804) 786-6551 or (800) 552-9745.