

In memoriam: Joshua Spivak



Joshua Spivak, senior research fellow at the California Constitution Center, died peacefully in his sleep on July 12, 2025 at age 51. He was the nation's foremost — nay, only — expert on recall elections. He was a thinker and scholar who published many works to define the field he pioneered: books, academic journal articles, and hundreds of public commentary pieces. A frequent contributor to news programs and stories, Josh was everyone's first call whenever a recall petition was filed somewhere. With his grand view, vast knowledge, and great passion for the subject, he was the definitive authority on recall elections.

His early passing is a painful loss: to his family, to his colleagues, and the law. But be glad for him that he lived with meaning and achieved a great work. A life's purpose is a gift, a chance to contribute, to be a contender. Josh embraced his opportunity with joy. He made his mark on the law and civil society by helping people in California and the nation to understand the recall's power. Josh leaves behind perhaps the most lasting legacy: the great gift of knowledge.

Josh's colleagues at the California Constitution Center mark his passing with regret and gratitude for the opportunity to share in his mission. We worked together, taught together, wrote together. He was one of us. He will be missed.

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