

HCS HJR 63 -- INITIATIVE PETITIONS

SPONSOR: Jones, 89 (Parson)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Special Committee on General Laws by a vote of 8 to 5.

Upon voter approval, this proposed constitutional amendment changes the requirements for submitting an initiative petition that proposes an amendment to the Missouri Constitution. Currently, a petition must be signed by 8% of the legal voters in each of two-thirds of the state's Congressional districts before it can be placed on the ballot. The resolution requires 15% of the legal voters in each of the Congressional districts to sign the petition. The number of signatures required for a petition proposing a law is also increased from 5% to 10% of those voters.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Effect on General Revenue Fund of an income of \$0 or a cost of More than \$7,000,000 in FY 2011, an income of \$0 in FY 2012, and an income of \$0 or a cost of \$208,680 in FY 2013. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the bill will make it more difficult for special interest groups to amend the state constitution. Missouri has a simple majority requirement for passing amendments which is very easy to accomplish compared to most other states.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Parson; Missouri Farm Bureau; Missouri Federation of Animal Owners; and Missouri Cattlemens Association.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that special interest groups are financially able to meet enhanced signature requirements and the bill will only exclude grassroots efforts that are not as well funded. Changing the requirement for amending the Missouri Constitution to a supermajority or to require collection of initiative petition signatures in all Congressional districts would be a better solution.

Testifying against the bill were Ron Calzone; and Concerned Women of America of Missouri.