

HCS HB 1289 -- INITIATIVE REFERENDUM FILING

SPONSOR: Engler

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Government Efficiency by a vote of 5 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Legislative Oversight Committee by a vote of 7 to 2.

This bill changes laws regarding initiatives and referendums. In its main provisions the bill:

- (1) Requires the text of proposed initiatives to be in 12 point font with numbered pages;
- (2) Requires an initial \$500 filing fee for each referendum petition sample sheet with an additional \$10 fee for each page over a 10 page limit;
- (3) Prohibits the use of referenda to modify or supersede federal law or regulation or to accomplish acts delegated to the state legislature by federal law or the Constitution of the United States;
- (4) Creates a petition signature verification fund to consist of monies from an \$.90 per signature collection fee for those petitions using paid circulators. The Secretary of State may use the funds for verification of signatures;
- (5) Increases the length limit of summary statements for ballot language from 50 to 150 words;
- (6) Authorizes the General Assembly to appropriate additional monies into the signature verification fund and to pay local election authorities for signature verification;
- (7) Authorizes the Secretary of State's office and the office of the Attorney General to reject petitions on the basis of noncompliance with the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of Missouri; and
- (8) Clarifies that court-ordered challenges to ballot titles invalidate signatures collected prior to the court order.

The bill has a delayed effective date of November 8, 2018.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that Missouri is one of the few states that allow initiative petitions and we have to get them under control. The bill is trying to stop frivolous petitions.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Engler; Missouri Association of County Clerks & Election Authorities; Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives; Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Richard Sheets, Missouri Municipal League; John R Ashcroft, Missouri Secretary of State; Missouri Farm Bureau; and the Missouri Cattlemen's Association.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say they fear it will overly inhibit regular folks from filing initiative petitions, and that it is akin to a poll tax.

Testifying against the bill were American Federation of Teachers Missouri (ATF); Missouri American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO); and the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri.