

HJR 26 -- CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

SPONSOR: Falkner

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Elections and Elected Officials by a vote of 7 to 3. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Administrative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 4.

Upon voter approval, this proposed Constitutional amendment would require an amendment referred to the people by the General Assembly to achieve a majority vote for passage and an amendment referred to the people by initiative petition to achieve a two-thirds supermajority vote for passage. Amendments referred by the General Assembly will take effect 30 days after the election if approved.

This bill is the same as HJR 7(2019).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that Constitutional amendments should be properly vetted and that a deliberative process is very helpful in preventing mistakes, errors, and unintended consequences.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Falkner; Samantha Davis, Missouri Corn Growers Association; Missouri Cattlemen'S Association; Missouri Soybean Association;and the Opportunity Solutions Project.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that the initiative process is not easy and only a very small percentage of ballot measures are certified to appear on the ballot in any given election. Hundreds of petitions are submitted each year with only a few making it to the ballot. The people should retain their fundamental right to act in a democratic fashion to change state law.

Testifying against the bill were Alice Barber; Barbara Beier; Frances Farah; Jacob Hummel, Missouri AFL-CIO; Jahnavi Delmonico; Richard G Von Glahn, Missouri Jobs with Justice Voter Action; Sarah Starnes; Stephen Davey; Susan Gibson; Melissa Vatterott, Missouri Coalition for the Environment; John Saxton; Arnie Dienoff; Padraic McGrath; Brian Wingbermuehle; Planned Parenthood Advocates in Missouri; Stephanie A. Clarke; Missouri Budget Project; Carly Langlois; Gene Davison; Jenny; Shelley Swoyer; Susan Keturah Schmalzbauer; Tony Smith; Collins F Chetwin; Lisa Ann Williams; Margie Richcreek; Sierra Club Missouri Chapter; and Jobs with Justice Voters Action.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the State Constitution should only be changed with widespread agreement. A truly

grassroots measure has not been successful in decades. Most recent changes are the result of professional interest groups. Because Missouri is a republic, there is no need to change the State Constitution on a regular bases and statutory law change should be preferred in most cases. The state legislature is typically good at reaching a reasonable compromise that reflects the overall interests of the people. The volume of petition filing is not a serious problem for the Missouri Secretary of State's Office.

Testifying on the bill were Cheryl Hibbett, who submitted written testimony, and John R. Ashcroft, Missouri Secretary of State.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.