

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2124

As Reported By House Committee On:
Appropriations

Title: An act relating to notice and verification of initiatives, referendums, and other ballot measures.

Brief Description: Changing notice and verification procedures for initiatives, referendums, and other ballot measures.

Sponsors: Representatives Patterson and Locke.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Appropriations, April 9, 1993, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 23 members: Representatives Locke, Chair; Valle, Vice Chair; Carlson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Appelwick; Ballasiotes; Basich; Cooke; Dorn; Dunshee; G. Fisher; Jacobsen; Lemmon; Linville; Morton; Peery; Rust; Sehlin; Sheahan; Sommers; Stevens; Talcott; Wang; and Wolfe.

Staff: Beth Redfield (786-7130).

Background: The state's constitution requires a notice to be published in every legal newspaper in the state announcing that a constitutional amendment is to be voted on during the next election. The notice must be published four times during the four weeks before the election (article XXIII, section 1). State statutes assign this task to the Office of the Secretary of State and require a similar notice to be published regarding a state referendum authorizing state debt (RCW 29.27.072). These notices are in addition to the information regarding the measures that must appear in the state's voters' pamphlet (see RCW 29.81.010).

The secretary is authorized by law to use a statistical sampling method to verify whether a state initiative or referendum petition does or does not contain the constitutionally required minimum number of valid signatures. Such a sampling method cannot be used as the source of this verification if the sampling technique indicates that less than 110 percent of the required number

of valid signatures are on petitions for a measure (RCW 29.79.200). If signatures must be verified and the statistical method cannot be used, each signature on the petitions must be individually verified and counted.

Summary of Bill: The notice that the secretary of state must publish regarding a proposed constitutional amendment or bill authorizing state debt is altered. It would contain a brief explanatory statement regarding the ballot measure in lieu of an explanation of current statutory or constitutional law and an explanation of the effect of the ballot measure. It would no longer need to identify the vote in each house of the Legislature on the measure.

A statistical sampling method may be used in verifying the signature count for an initiative or referendum if the method indicates that the petition contains the required number of valid signatures (rather than 110 percent of the required number of valid signatures).

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect July 1, 1993.

Testimony For: None.

Testimony Against: None.

Witnesses: None.