
HOUSE BILL 1189

State of Washington 53rd Legislature 1993 Regular Session

By Representatives Anderson, Reams and Dyer

Read first time 01/20/93. Referred to Committee on State Government.

1 AN ACT Relating to ballot issues; amending RCW 29.27.060,
2 29.79.040, 29.79.110, 29.27.065, 29.27.067, and 35A.29.120; and adding
3 a new section to chapter 29.79 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 29.79 RCW
6 to read as follows:

7 (1) Except as provided to the contrary in RCW 82.14.036, 82.46.021,
8 or 82.80.090, the ballot title of any referendum filed against an
9 enactment or portion of an enactment of the state legislature or of the
10 legislative authority of a unit of local government shall be composed
11 of three elements: (a) An identification of the enacting legislative
12 body; (b) a concise statement identifying the essential features of the
13 enactment against which the referendum is filed; and (c) a question
14 asking the voters whether the enactment should or should not be revoked
15 by the people. A "yes" vote on the referendum shall have the effect of
16 revoking the legislative enactment. The ballot issue shall be
17 displayed on the ballot substantially as follows:

1 Referendum Measure No. XX. The (name of legislative body) has passed
2 a law that (concise statement). Should this law be revoked?

3 YES

4 NO

5 (2) For a referendum measure against a state enactment, the concise
6 statement shall be prepared by the attorney general and shall not
7 exceed twenty-five words.

8 (3) The concise statement for a referendum measure against an
9 enactment of the legislative authority of a unit of local government
10 shall not exceed seventy-five words. If the local governmental unit is
11 a city or a town, the concise statement shall be prepared by the city
12 or town attorney. If the local governmental unit is a county, the
13 concise statement shall be prepared by the prosecuting attorney of the
14 county. If the unit is a unit of local government other than a city,
15 town, or county, the concise statement shall be prepared by the county
16 within which the unit is located.

17 (4) A referendum measure against the enactment of a unit of local
18 government shall be advertised in the manner provided for nominees for
19 elective office.

20 **Sec. 2.** RCW 29.27.060 and 1985 c 252 s 1 are each amended to read
21 as follows:

22 (1) When a proposed constitution or constitutional amendment or
23 other question is to be submitted to the people of the state for state-
24 wide popular vote, the attorney general shall prepare a concise
25 statement posed as a question and not exceeding twenty words containing
26 the essential features thereof expressed in such a manner as to clearly
27 identify the proposition to be voted upon.

28 Questions to be submitted to the people of a county or municipality
29 shall also be advertised as provided for nominees for office, and in
30 such cases there shall also be printed on the ballot a concise
31 statement posed as a question and not exceeding seventy-five words
32 containing the essential features thereof expressed in such a manner as
33 to clearly identify the proposition to be voted upon, which statement
34 shall be prepared by the city or town attorney for the city or town,
35 and by the prosecuting attorney for the county or any other (~~political~~
36 ~~subdivision of the state~~) unit of local government, other than

1 ((cities)) a city or town, the majority area of which is situated in
2 the county.

3 The concise statement constitutes the ballot title.

4 (2) The secretary of state shall certify to the county auditors the
5 ballot title for a proposed constitution, constitutional amendment or
6 other state-wide question at the same time and in the same manner as
7 the ballot titles to initiatives and referendums.

8 (3) Subsection (1) of this section does not apply to referendum
9 measures filed against an enactment of the state legislature or against
10 an enactment of the legislative authority of a unit of local
11 government, nor does it apply to the extent that other provisions of
12 state law provide otherwise for a specific type of ballot question or
13 proposition.

14 **Sec. 3.** RCW 29.79.040 and 1982 c 116 s 4 are each amended to read
15 as follows:

16 Within seven calendar days after the receipt of an initiative or
17 referendum measure the attorney general shall formulate and transmit to
18 the secretary of state ((a)) the concise statement ((posed as a
19 question and not to exceed twenty words,)) required by RCW 29.27.060 or
20 section 1 of this act bearing the serial number of the measure and a
21 summary of the measure, not to exceed seventy-five words, to follow the
22 statement. The statement may be distinct from the legislative title of
23 the measure, and shall give a true and impartial statement of the
24 purpose of the measure. Neither the statement nor the summary may
25 intentionally be an argument, nor likely to create prejudice, either
26 for or against the measure. Except as provided for in section 1 of
27 this act, such a concise statement shall constitute the ballot title.
28 The ballot title or, for a referendum against a state enactment, the
29 concise statement formulated by the attorney general shall be the
30 ballot title of or concise statement for the measure unless changed on
31 appeal. When practicable, the question posed by the ballot title shall
32 be written in such a way that an affirmative answer to such question
33 and an affirmative vote on the measure would result in a change in then
34 current law, and a negative answer to the question and a negative vote
35 on the measure would result in no change to then current law.

36 **Sec. 4.** RCW 29.79.110 and 1982 c 116 s 11 are each amended to read
37 as follows:

