

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6068

As Passed House:

April 18, 1997

Title: An act relating to legal advertising of state measures.

Brief Description: Enhancing legal advertising of state measures.

Sponsors: Senators West, Spanel and Oke; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/18/97, 93-4.

Staff: Steve Lundin, (786-7127).

Background: The state Constitution provides for the following four different types of state ballot propositions: constitutional amendments, state initiative measures, state referendum measures, and proposition authorizing state indebtedness beyond the indebtedness limitations.

The state Constitution requires each of these ballot propositions to be submitted to voters at a state general election, except that the legislature may refer a referendum measure, or proposition authorizing state indebtedness beyond the indebtedness limitation, to voters at a special election. The state Constitution requires notice of a proposed constitutional amendment to be published in each legal newspaper in the state at least four times during the four weeks prior to the general election at which the constitutional amendment is submitted to voters. No other constitutional requirements exist for notice of an election at which a state ballot proposition is submitted to voters.

Statutes require the Secretary of State to publish notice of a proposed constitutional amendment, or proposition authorizing state debts, under the same conditions that the constitution requires notice of a constitutional amendment to be published. In addition, additional notice of these measures must be supplemented by broadcasting notice on radio and television. No statutory requirements exist for publishing or broadcasting notice of a state initiative or referendum measure that is submitted to voters.

Summary of Bill: The statutory responsibility of the Secretary of State to publish and broadcast notices of state ballot measures is altered.

Requirements are expanded by requiring notice of any state ballot measure to be published and broadcast and by expanding extent of supplemental broadcast notices to be equivalent to the published notices.

Requirements are limited by: (1) Only requiring notice to be published if the ballot proposition is submitted at a general election; (2) limiting the publishing to the availability of funds appropriated specifically for that purpose; (3) changing the details of the notice from being mandatory to optional; and (4) prohibiting the an individual candidate or incumbent public official from being referred to or identified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which the bill is passed.