

HB 2277 - DIGEST

Declares an intent to ensure vibrant initiative and referendum participation by guarding privacy and assuring that all valid signatures are attributed to initiatives and referenda as part of the review process.

Declares that Washington's laws and Constitution ensure that a voter's decision on who they vote for or against and what measures he or she votes for or against is not publicly revealed. Such a violation of privacy may subject voters to potential harassment, retaliation, and intimidation. Similar chilling of constitutional rights will be avoided by extending privacy protection to those engaged in the right to peacefully petition their government by initiative and referendum.

Declares an intent to ensure that valid voter signatures on initiative and referendum petitions count and will not be rejected by the secretary of state. If a voter signs an initiative or referendum petition and his or her petition signature matches the signature on their voter registration, then the signature must be accepted by the secretary of state. Valid voter signatures must count, invalid ones should not, and scrutiny to assure this result is preferred to actions and regulations which might chill the exercise of the right to petition.

Provides that initiative and referendum petitions and the names and addresses of citizens contained on them that are submitted to the secretary of state are not public records under chapter 42.56 RCW and shall not be made public beyond the observers as specified in RCW 29A.72.230.