

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Olympia, Washington

Bil Analysis

Bil No. HB 1626

Disclosing petition gathering.

Brief title

Hearing Date 2/9/99

Reps Schmid, Ogden and McMorris

Sponsor(s)

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State Government Committee

Phone 786-7127

BACKGROUND:

The State Constitution vests powers of initiative and referendum to the legislature.

Statutes implementing this authority describe the appearance of initiative and referendum petitions. Various crimes relating to the initiative and referendum process are established by statute including various classes of felonies and various misdemeanors.

SUMMARY:

A variety of requirements are made for petitions, initiative and referendum measures.

1) Acknowledgment that signatures are valid.

Space must be provided on each petition, initiative or referendum measure where after the signature has been obtained each person who procured a signature on the petition or signature print is on the name and address certifying that, to the best of his knowledge, the signature on the petition is valid.

2) Indication of paid signature gathering.

If paid signature gathering is used to gather signatures on a petition, initiative or referendum measure, statements must be included on the top of the petition or paid signature gathering and indicating the name of the group that is paying to circulate the petition. This statement does not have to appear on the top of a petition on the same measure if paid signature gathering is not used to solicit signatures on the petition.

3) Record of payments for paid signature gathering.

Any person who provides compensation for persons circulating signatures on a petition, initiative or referendum

measures must keep records of each person who procured signatures for consideration on a separate petition. These records must be kept current and submitted to the Secretary of State at the time the petitions are filed.

4) Electoral Crimes.

It is a gross misdemeanor for a person to circulate a procured signature petition or a state initiative referendum if it fails to meet the requirements set forth in state law, including where applicable, the requirement that statements be included detailing compensation being paid or for circulation of the petition and the name of the group paying for the petition.

5) Filing and Public Disclosure Commission.

A political committee that pays persons to gather signatures on a state initiative referendum petition must file reports of contributions and expenditures to the Public Disclosure Commission on the twenty-fifth and seventh days before the date the petition is filed on the tenth day of the first month after the petition has been filed. These reports in addition to the periodic reports must be filed. Such a political committee must keep books of account current and available for public inspection eight days before the day the petition is filed.

FISCAL NOTE: Not requested.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Ninety days after adjournment of session which bill passed.