

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2331

As Reported by House Committee On:
State Government

Title: An act relating to requirements for filing an initiative or referendum.

Brief Description: Revising initiative filing fee procedures.

Sponsors: Representatives Romero, McDermott and Schmidt; by request of Secretary of State.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government: 1/25/02, 1/29/02 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires proposers of an initiative or referendum to deposit a \$100 fee or submit the signatures of 100 registered voters. The \$100 fee is refundable upon showing that sufficient petitions have been printed and delivered to the petitioner, or that the required number of signatures has been obtained.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Romero, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; McMorris, Ranking Minority Member; McDermott, Schindler, Schmidt and Upthegrove.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

The state constitution guarantees to the people the power to propose, enact, or reject bills and laws through the initiative and referendum process. Any person who wishes to submit a proposed initiative measure to the people, or order that a referendum of all or part of any act, bill or law passed by the Legislature be submitted to the people, must file the measure with the Secretary of State, along with a filing fee, currently \$5, and an affidavit that the proposer is a legal voter.

The number of valid signatures necessary for either type of initiative to qualify for the ballot is 8 percent of the votes cast for Governor at the last gubernatorial election. The number of signatures required for a referendum to qualify for the ballot is 4 percent of the votes cast for Governor at the last gubernatorial election. The signed petitions for an initiative to the people must be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State at least four months prior to the election, and the signed petitions for an initiative to the Legislature must be filed at least 10 days prior to the regular legislative session.

Summary of Bill:

The filing fee prescribed under the statute is deleted. Proposers of an initiative or referendum must deposit a fee of \$100 or secure the signatures of 100 registered voters, along with the required affidavit that the proposer is a legal voter. If the proposer deposits the \$100 fee, it is fully refundable upon either:

- 1) the filing of an affidavit from a printer affirming that petitions have been printed and delivered to the petitioner sufficient to permit the filing of the required number of signatures required by the state constitution; or
 - 2) the filing of the required number of signatures.
-

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Testimony For: Many initiatives are filed by sponsors who have no intention of soliciting signatures. Of the 37 initiatives filed in 2001, only three made it to the ballot. Of the 59 initiatives filed in 2000, only six made it to the ballot. Last year, one sponsor filed 16 initiatives in one day.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Sam Reed, Secretary of State; and Dave Elliott and Dean Logan, Office of the Secretary of State.