

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5920

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Security, February 19, 2015

Title: An act relating to time for filing initiative measures.

Brief Description: Changing the time for filing initiative measures.

Sponsors: Senator Benton.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Security: 2/17/15, 2/19/15 [DP, DNP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & SECURITY

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Pearson, Vice Chair; Dansel.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Lias, Ranking Minority Member; Habib and McCoy.

Staff: Samuel Brown (786-7470)

Background: The Legislature adopted processes for initiative measures in 1912. These processes are preserved in the state Constitution and allow the following:

- initiatives to the people, where the issue is submitted for a vote of the people at the next state general election; and
- initiatives to the Legislature, where the issue is submitted to the Legislature at its next regular session. The Legislature may then approve the measure, approve an alternative measure, or take no action on the measure. If the Legislature approves an alternative measure, both the alternative and original measures are submitted to the voters at the next general election for approval or rejection. If the Legislature takes no action, the measure is submitted to the voters at the next general election for approval or rejection.

Initiative petitions require certified signatures from 8 percent of the total number of votes cast for the Office of the Governor at the last regular gubernatorial election to be placed on the ballot. Based on the Secretary of State's data from the 2012 gubernatorial election, the

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certified signatures of 246,372 registered voters are required to place an initiative measure on the ballot through the 2016 general election.

The text of an initiative to the people must be filed with the Secretary of State's office within ten months prior to the election at which it is to be submitted. The signature petitions for an initiative to the people must be filed with the Secretary of State at least four months before the general election, giving proponents a maximum of six months to collect sufficient signatures to secure the measure's place on the ballot. The text of an initiative to the Legislature must be filed with the Secretary of State's office within ten months prior to the next regular legislative session at which it is to be submitted. The signature petitions for an initiative to the Legislature must be filed at least ten days before the regular legislative session begins.

Summary of Bill: The text of an initiative to the people must be filed with the Secretary of State within 20 months prior to the election at which it is to be submitted. The text of an initiative to the Legislature must be filed with the Secretary of State within 20 months prior to the next regular legislative session at which it is to be submitted.

The deadlines for filing initiatives with the Secretary of State are not changed, so the maximum period for signature gathering is extended to 16 months for initiatives to the people, and 20 months minus ten days for initiatives to the Legislature.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: We should have a longer period of time to collect signatures because the population has increased.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Benton, prime sponsor.