

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5441

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, March 4, 2003

Title: An act relating to paper size of initiative and referendum petitions.

Brief Description: Allowing initiative and referendum petitions on 8 1/2 by 11 paper.

Sponsors: Senators Roach and Esser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 2/14/03, 3/4/03 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Roach, Chair; Stevens, Vice Chair; Horn and McCaslin.

Staff: Mac Nicholson (786-7445)

Background: The format for initiative and referendum petitions, including type of paper, size, and content, is prescribed in statute. Petitions must be printed on paper not less than 11 inches wide by 14 inches long.

Summary of Bill: The size of paper for petitions is changed to not less than 8-1/2 inches wide by 11 inches long. The Secretary of State must adopt rules establishing readability standards including, but not limited to, the minimum font size for text.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Smaller paper size makes petitions easier to handle and circulate.

Testimony Against: A smaller paper size for initiative petitions raises concerns about fraud and changes that could be made to the initiative. Smaller petitions may require smaller print on the measure making it harder for the electorate to read and understand.

Testified: PRO: Senator Pam Roach, prime sponsor; CON: Kristen Sawin, AWB; Rick Slunaker, AGC.

SENATE BILL 5441

State of Washington

58th Legislature

2003 Regular Session

By Senators Roach and Esser

Read first time 01/24/2003. Referred to Committee on Government Operations & Elections.

1 AN ACT Relating to paper size of initiative and referendum
2 petitions; and amending RCW 29.79.080.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 **Sec. 1.** RCW 29.79.080 and 1982 c 116 s 8 are each amended to read
5 as follows:

6 The person proposing the measure shall print blank petitions upon
7 single sheets of paper of good writing quality (including but not
8 limited to newsprint) not less than ((eleven)) eight and one-half
9 inches in width and not less than ((fourteen)) eleven inches in length.
10 Each petition at the time of circulating, signing, and filing with the
11 secretary of state shall consist of not more than one sheet with
12 numbered lines for not more than twenty signatures, with the prescribed
13 warning and title, shall be in the form required by RCW 29.79.090,
14 29.79.100, or 29.79.110, ((as now or hereafter amended,)) and shall
15 have a full, true, and correct copy of the proposed measure referred to
16 therein printed on the reverse side of the petition.

17 The secretary of state shall adopt rules establishing readability

1 standards, including, but not limited to, the minimum font size of the
2 text used on the petitions.

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State Government Committee

HB 1014

Brief Description: Allowing initiative and referendum petitions on 8 ½ by 11 paper.

Sponsors: Representatives Nixon, Anderson and Mielke.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Changes the size of paper for initiative and referenda petitions from not less than 11 inches wide by 14 inches long to not less than 8-1/2 inches wide by 11 inches long. The Secretary of State is required to establish readability standards for petitions.

Hearing Date: 1/17/03

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. Two types of initiative measures are provided. First, an initiative may be submitted directly to state voters for their approval or rejection. This is referred to as an Initiative to the People. Second, an initiative may be submitted to the Legislature for its consideration. This is referred to as an Initiative to the Legislature. 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 Office of the Secretary of State, along with a filing fee 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 format for petitions, including type of paper, size, and content, is stipulated by state law.

Summary of Bill:

The size of paper for petitions is changed from not less than 11 inches wide by 14 inches long to not less than 8-1/2 inches wide by 11 inches long. The Secretary of State is

required to establish readability standards including, but not limited to, the minimum font size for text.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

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

HOUSE BILL 1014

State of Washington 58th Legislature 2003 Regular Session

By Representatives Nixon, Anderson and Mielke

Prefiled 1/3/2003. Read first time 01/13/2003. Referred to
Committee on State Government.

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