

**Representative LaVar Christensen** proposes the following substitute bill:

**REFERENDUM AMENDMENTS**

2016 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Fred C. Cox**

Senate Sponsor: Luz Escamilla

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill amends provisions of the Election Code relating to referenda.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- ▶ addresses requirements relating to the referendum process for challenging a state law;
- ▶ provides that the deadline for filing an application to circulate a referendum petition challenging a state law occurs five days after:
  - the day on which the governor signs the law; or
  - the day on which the law becomes a law because the governor fails to veto or sign the law;
- ▶ extends the effective date, under certain circumstances, of a state law challenged by referendum; and
- ▶ makes technical changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None



26 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

27 AMENDS:

28 **20A-7-101**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2014, Chapters 364 and 396

29 **20A-7-301**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2011, Chapter 17

30 **20A-7-302**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 1995, Chapter 153

31 **20A-7-306**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2011, Chapter 17

32 **20A-7-307**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2011, Chapter 17



34 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

35 Section 1. Section **20A-7-101** is amended to read:

36 **20A-7-101. Definitions.**

37 As used in this chapter:

38 (1) "Action date" means, in relation to a state law that is the subject of a referendum  
39 petition:

40 (a) the day on which the governor signs the law; or

41 (b) the day on which the law becomes a law because the governor fails to veto or sign  
42 the law, as provided in Utah Constitution Article VII, Section 8, Subsection (2).

43 [~~1~~] (2) "Budget officer" means:

44 (a) for a county, the person designated as budget officer in Section **17-19a-203**;

45 (b) for a city, the person designated as budget officer in Subsection **10-6-106(5)**; or

46 (c) for a town, the town council.

47 [~~2~~] (3) "Certified" means that the county clerk has acknowledged a signature as being  
48 the signature of a registered voter.

49 [~~3~~] (4) "Circulation" means the process of submitting an initiative or referendum  
50 petition to legal voters for their signature.

51 [~~4~~] (5) "Final fiscal impact statement" means a financial statement prepared after  
52 voters approve an initiative that contains the information required by Subsection  
53 **20A-7-202.5(2)** or **20A-7-502.5(2)**.

54 [~~5~~] (6) "Initial fiscal impact estimate" means:

55 (a) a financial statement prepared under Section **20A-7-202.5** after the filing of an  
56 application for an initiative petition; or

57 (b) a financial and legal statement prepared under Section 20A-7-502.5 or 20A-7-602.5  
58 for an initiative or referendum petition.

59 [~~(6)~~] (7) "Initiative" means a new law proposed for adoption by the public as provided  
60 in this chapter.

61 [~~(7)~~] (8) "Initiative packet" means a copy of the initiative petition, a copy of the  
62 proposed law, and the signature sheets, all of which have been bound together as a unit.

63 [~~(8)~~] (9) "Legal signatures" means the number of signatures of legal voters that:

64 (a) meet the numerical requirements of this chapter; and

65 (b) have been certified and verified as provided in this chapter.

66 [~~(9)~~] (10) "Legal voter" means a person who:

67 (a) is registered to vote; or

68 (b) becomes registered to vote before the county clerk certifies the signatures on an  
69 initiative or referendum petition.

70 [~~(10)~~] (11) "Local attorney" means the county attorney, city attorney, or town attorney  
71 in whose jurisdiction a local initiative or referendum petition is circulated.

72 [~~(11)~~] (12) "Local clerk" means the county clerk, city recorder, or town clerk in whose  
73 jurisdiction a local initiative or referendum petition is circulated.

74 [~~(12)~~] (13) (a) "Local law" includes an ordinance, resolution, master plan, and any  
75 comprehensive zoning regulation adopted by ordinance or resolution.

76 (b) "Local law" does not include an individual property zoning decision.

77 [~~(13)~~] (14) "Local legislative body" means the legislative body of a county, city, or  
78 town.

79 [~~(14)~~] (15) "Local obligation law" means a local law passed by the local legislative  
80 body regarding a bond that was approved by a majority of qualified voters in an election.

81 [~~(15)~~] (16) "Local tax law" means a local law, passed by a political subdivision with an  
82 annual or biannual calendar fiscal year, that increases a tax or imposes a new tax.

83 [~~(16)~~] (17) "Measure" means a proposed constitutional amendment, an initiative, or  
84 referendum.

85 [~~(17)~~] (18) "Referendum" means a process by which a law passed by the Legislature or  
86 by a local legislative body is submitted or referred to the voters for their approval or rejection.

87 [~~(18)~~] (19) "Referendum packet" means a copy of the referendum petition, a copy of

88 the law being submitted or referred to the voters for their approval or rejection, and the  
89 signature sheets, all of which have been bound together as a unit.

90 ~~[(19)]~~ (20) (a) "Signature" means a holographic signature.

91 (b) "Signature" does not mean an electronic signature.

92 ~~[(20)]~~ (21) "Signature sheets" means sheets in the form required by this chapter that are  
93 used to collect signatures in support of an initiative or referendum.

94 ~~[(21)]~~ (22) "Sponsors" means the legal voters who support the initiative or referendum  
95 and who sign the application for petition copies.

96 ~~[(22)]~~ (23) "Sufficient" means that the signatures submitted in support of an initiative  
97 or referendum petition have been certified and verified as required by this chapter.

98 ~~[(23)]~~ (24) "Verified" means acknowledged by the person circulating the petition as  
99 required in Sections [20A-7-205](#) and [20A-7-305](#).

100 Section 2. Section **20A-7-301** is amended to read:

101 **20A-7-301. Referendum -- Signature requirements -- Submission to voters.**

102 (1) In accordance with Article VI, Section 1, Subsection (2)(a)(i)(B) of the Utah  
103 Constitution, a law passed by at least a two-thirds vote of the Legislature is not subject to a  
104 referendum.

105 ~~[(1)(a)]~~ (2) A person seeking to have a law passed by the Legislature submitted to a  
106 vote of the people shall obtain:

107 ~~[(i)]~~ (a) legal signatures equal to 10% of the cumulative total of all votes cast by voters  
108 of this state for all candidates for President of the United States at the last regular general  
109 election at which a President of the United States was elected; and

110 ~~[(ii)]~~ (b) from each of at least 15 counties, legal signatures equal to 10% of the total of  
111 all votes cast in that county for all candidates for President of the United States at the last  
112 regular general election at which a President of the United States was elected.

113 ~~[(b)]~~ (3) When the lieutenant governor declares a referendum petition sufficient under  
114 this part, the governor shall issue an executive order that:

115 ~~[(i)]~~ (a) directs that the referendum be submitted to the voters at the next regular  
116 general election; or

117 ~~[(ii)]~~ (b) calls a special election according to the requirements of Section [20A-1-203](#)  
118 and directs that the referendum be submitted to the voters at that special election.

119           ~~[(2)]~~ (4) When a referendum petition has been declared sufficient, the law that is the  
120 subject of the petition does not take effect unless and until it is approved by a vote of the  
121 people at a regular general election or a statewide special election.

122           ~~[(3)]~~ (5) The lieutenant governor shall provide to any interested person from the  
123 official canvass of the last regular general election at which a President of the United States  
124 was elected:

125           (a) the cumulative total of all votes cast by voters of this state for all candidates for  
126 President of the United States; and

127           (b) for each county, the total of all votes cast in that county for all candidates for  
128 President of the United States.

129           Section 3. Section **20A-7-302** is amended to read:

130           **20A-7-302. Referendum process -- Application procedures.**

131           (1) ~~[Persons wishing]~~ Individuals who desire to circulate a referendum petition in  
132 relation to a law passed by the Legislature that is subject to challenge under Article VI, Section  
133 1, Subsection (2)(a)(i)(B) of the Utah Constitution shall file an application with the lieutenant  
134 governor within five calendar days after the ~~[end of the legislative session at which the law~~  
135 ~~passed]~~ action date.

136           (2) The application shall contain:

137           (a) the name and residence address of at least five sponsors of the referendum petition;

138           (b) a certification indicating that each of the sponsors:

139           (i) is a voter; and

140           (ii) has voted in a regular general election in Utah within the last three years;

141           (c) the signature of each of the sponsors, attested to by a notary public; and

142           (d) ~~[a]~~ an enrolled copy of the law.

143           Section 4. Section **20A-7-306** is amended to read:

144           **20A-7-306. Submitting the referendum petition -- Certification of signatures by**  
145 **the county clerks -- Transfer to lieutenant governor.**

146           (1) (a) ~~[No later than 40 days after the end of the legislative session at which the law~~  
147 ~~passed, the]~~ The sponsors shall deliver each signed and verified referendum packet to the  
148 county clerk of the county in which the packet was circulated no later than 40 days after the  
149 action date.

150 (b) A sponsor may not submit a referendum packet after the deadline established in this  
151 Subsection (1).

152 (2) (a) No later than 55 days after the [~~end of the legislative session at which the law~~  
153 ~~passed~~] action date, the county clerk shall:

154 (i) check the [~~names of all persons completing~~] name of each individual who  
155 completed the verification on the last page of each referendum packet to determine whether [~~or~~  
156 ~~not those persons are Utah residents and are~~] the individual is a Utah resident and is at least 18  
157 years old; and

158 (ii) submit the name of each [~~of those persons~~] individual described in Subsection  
159 (2)(a)(i) who is not a Utah resident or who is not at least 18 years old to the attorney general  
160 and county attorney.

161 (b) The county clerk may not certify a signature under Subsection (3) on a referendum  
162 packet that is not verified in accordance with Section 20A-7-305.

163 (3) No later than 55 days after the [~~end of the legislative session at which the law~~  
164 ~~passed~~] action date, the county clerk shall:

165 (a) determine whether each signer is a registered voter according to the requirements of  
166 Section 20A-7-306.3;

167 (b) certify on the referendum petition whether each name is that of a registered voter;  
168 and

169 (c) deliver all of the verified referendum packets to the lieutenant governor.

170 (4) Upon receipt of a referendum packet under Subsection (3) and any statement  
171 submitted under Subsection 20A-7-305(3), the lieutenant governor shall remove from the  
172 referendum petition a voter's signature if the voter has requested the removal in accordance  
173 with Subsection 20A-7-305(3).

174 Section 5. Section 20A-7-307 is amended to read:

175 **20A-7-307. Evaluation by the lieutenant governor.**

176 (1) When each referendum packet is received from a county clerk, the lieutenant  
177 governor shall check off from the record the number of each referendum packet filed.

178 (2) (a) After all of the referendum packets have been received by the lieutenant  
179 governor and the lieutenant governor has removed the signatures as required by Section  
180 20A-7-306, the lieutenant governor shall:

181 (i) count the number of the names certified by the county clerks that remain on each  
182 verified signature sheet; and

183 (ii) declare the petition to be sufficient or insufficient no later than 60 days after the  
184 ~~[end of the legislative session at which the law passed]~~ action date.

185 (b) Subject to Subsection 20A-7-301(2), if the law that is the subject of the referendum  
186 petition is due to take effect less than 60 days after the action date, the effective date of the law  
187 is extended to the day on which the lieutenant governor declares the petition to be sufficient or  
188 insufficient.

189 ~~[(b)]~~ (c) If the total number of names counted under Subsection (2)(a)(i) equals or  
190 exceeds the number of names required by Section 20A-7-301 and the requirements of this part  
191 are met, the lieutenant governor shall mark upon the front of the petition the word "sufficient."

192 ~~[(c)]~~ (d) If the total number of names counted under Subsection (2)(a)(i) does not equal  
193 or exceed the number of names required by Section 20A-7-301 or a requirement of this part is  
194 not met, the lieutenant governor shall mark upon the front of the petition the word  
195 "insufficient."

196 ~~[(d)]~~ (e) The lieutenant governor shall immediately notify any one of the sponsors of  
197 the lieutenant governor's finding.

198 (3) (a) If the lieutenant governor refuses to accept and file any referendum petition, any  
199 voter may apply to the supreme court for an extraordinary writ to compel the lieutenant  
200 governor to do so within 10 days after the refusal.

201 (b) If the supreme court determines that the referendum petition is legally sufficient,  
202 the lieutenant governor shall ~~[file it];~~

203 (i) file the referendum petition, with a verified copy of the judgment attached to ~~[it, as~~  
204 ~~of] the referendum petition; and~~

205 (ii) designate the filing date of the referendum petition as the date on which [it] the  
206 referendum petition was originally offered for filing in the lieutenant governor's office.

207 (c) If the supreme court determines that any petition filed is not legally sufficient, the  
208 supreme court may enjoin the lieutenant governor and all other officers from certifying or  
209 printing the ballot title and numbers of that measure on the official ballot.

210 (4) A petition determined to be sufficient in accordance with this section is qualified  
211 for the ballot.