

HB0242S03 compared with HB0242S01

~~{Omitted text}~~ shows text that was in HB0242S01 but was omitted in HB0242S03

inserted text shows text that was not in HB0242S01 but was inserted into HB0242S03

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Initiative and Referendum Signature Gathering and Removal Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Karen M. Peterson

Senate Sponsor: Calvin R. Musselman

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill addresses petition signature gathering and removal.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- requires an individual who gathers a statement requesting removal of a petition signer's signature to be at least 18 years old;
- beginning on May 6, 2026, requires a paid signature removal statement gatherer to:
 - display a badge disclosing certain information while gathering the statement; and
 - verify, on the statement, certain information about the individual who signs the statement;
- beginning on May 6, 2026, requires a signature removal statement, if collected by a paid gatherer, to include a notice that removing the signer's signature may prevent the initiative or referendum from appearing on the ballot;
- prohibits a person from paying a person to gather a signature removal statement unless the payment is based on an hourly rate;
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prohibits a person from using an initiative or referendum petition signer's email address for any non-petition related purpose;

- prohibits a voter from submitting a signature removal statement by mail using prepaid postage;
- creates an exception to the prohibition described above if a signature removal statement submitted by mail using prepaid postage is postmarked on or before the effective date of this bill;
- provides that, in certain circumstances, a county clerk may not refuse to certify an initiative or referendum petition signature solely because the date written next to the signature contains a one-calendar-year error;
- expands existing criminal penalties in relation to the initiative and referendum process by prohibiting an individual from:
 - making certain misrepresentations while the individual gathers petition signatures or signature removal statements; or
 - providing or offering to provide money, prepaid postage, or any {other} direct financial benefit to an individual to remove the individual's signature from {an initiative or referendum} a petition; {and}
- includes a coordination clause creating an exception to the prohibition in H.B. 32, Signature Gathering and Verification Amendments, on certifying a petition signature dated after the submission deadline when the date qualifies for the one-calendar-year error provision created by this bill; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

This bill provides a coordination clause.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

20A-1-1003 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 442

20A-7-105 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 448

20A-7-106 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 381

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20A-7-213 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 442

20A-7-216 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 448

20A-7-312 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 442

20A-7-314 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 448

20A-7-512 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 442

20A-7-515 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 448

20A-7-612 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 442

20A-7-615 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 448

ENACTS:

20A-7-104.5 , Utah Code Annotated 1953

Utah Code Sections affected by Coordination Clause:

20A-7-105 , as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 448

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

Section 1. Section **20A-1-1003** is amended to read:

20A-1-1003. Signature removal -- Statement required.

(1) A voter who signs a petition may have the voter's signature removed from the petition by submitting to the clerk a statement requesting that the voter's signature be removed.

(2)

(a)

(i) [The] Subject to Subsection (2)(a)(iii), the statement described in Subsection (1) shall include:

(A) the name or description of the petition from which the voter seeks to remove the voter's signature;

(B) the name of the voter;

(C) the resident address at which the voter is registered to vote;

(D) except as otherwise provided in Section 20A-7-106, the voter's signature; and

(E) the date of the signature described in Subsection (2)(a)(i)(D).

(ii) To increase the likelihood of the voter's signature being identified and removed, the statement may include the voter's birth date or age.

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(iii) {Hf} Beginning on May 6, 2026, if an individual is paid to collect a statement described in Subsection (1), the statement shall include, in addition to the information described in Subsection (2)(a)(i):

63 (A) the following printed notice, appearing immediately adjacent to the voter's signature: "I understand
that by signing this statement, the [name or description of petition] may not appear on the ballot.";
and

66 (B) the following verification to be completed by the individual who collects the statement:

81 (b)

(i) ~~Except as provided in Subsection 20A-7-216(5)(a), 20A-7-314(5)(a), 20A-7-515(4)(b), or~~
~~20A-7-615(4)(b), a~~ A voter may not submit a statement described in Subsection (1) by mail using
prepaid postage, email, or other electronic means.

103 (ii) Notwithstanding Subsection (2)(b)(i), a clerk may accept a statement described in Subsection (1)
submitted by mail using prepaid postage if the statement is postmarked on or before the effective
date of this bill.

84 (c) In order for the signature to be removed, the clerk must receive the statement described in
Subsection (1) no later than the deadline described in the provision of law governing the petition.

87 (d) A voter may only remove a signature from a petition in accordance with this section and the
provision of law governing the petition.

89 (e) A clerk shall analyze a signature, for purposes of removing a signature from a petition, in
accordance with Subsection (3).

91 (3) Except to the extent otherwise required under Section 20A-7-106, the clerk shall use the following
procedures to determine whether to remove an individual's signature from a petition after receiving
a timely, valid statement requesting removal of the signature:

94 (a) if the signer's name and address shown on the statement and the petition exactly match a name and
address shown on the official register and the individual's signature on the statement is reasonably
consistent with the individual's signature on the statewide voter registration database, the clerk shall
remove the signature from the petition;

99 (b) if there is no exact match of an address and a name, the clerk shall remove the signature from the
petition if:

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- (i) the address on the statement and the address provided by the individual with the individual's petition signature match the address of an individual on the official register with a substantially similar name; and
- (ii) the individual's signature on the statement is reasonably consistent with the signature on the statewide voter registration database of the individual described in Subsection (3)(b)(i); and
- (c) if there is no match of an address and a substantially similar name, the clerk shall remove the signature from the petition if:
- (i) the birth date or age on the statement and the birth date or age provided by the individual with the individual's petition signature match the birth date or age of an individual on the official register with a substantially similar name; and
- (ii) the individual's signature on the statement is reasonably consistent with the signature on the statewide voter registration database of the individual described in Subsection (3)(b)(i).
- (4) If a signature does not qualify for removal under Subsection (3)(a), (b), or (c), or, if applicable, Section 20A-7-106, the clerk may not remove the signature from the petition.

Section 2. Section 2 is enacted to read:

20A-7-104.5. Signature removal statement gatherers -- Badge -- Information -- Payment.

- (1) An individual who gathers a statement described in Section 20A-1-1003 requesting removal of a signature from an initiative petition or referendum petition shall be at least 18 years old.
- (2) {An-} Beginning on May 6, 2026, an individual described in Subsection (1) who is paid to gather a statement shall, while gathering a statement, display a badge on the front of the individual's torso that complies with the following, ensuring that the information on the badge is clearly visible to the individual from whom the statement is sought:
- (a) the badge shall be printed in black ink on white cardstock and laminated; and
- (b) the information on the badge shall be in at least 24-point type and include the following information:
- (i) an identification number that is unique to the individual gathering the statement, assigned by:
- (A) for a statewide initiative or referendum, the lieutenant governor; or
- (B) for a local initiative or referendum, the local clerk;
- (ii) the title of the initiative or referendum petition to which the statement relates;
- (iii) the words "Paid Signature Removal Statement Gatherer"; and
- (iv) the name of the person or entity paying the individual to gather the statement.

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(3) A person may not pay an individual to gather a signature removal statement under this chapter unless the payment is based on an hourly rate.

Section 3. Section **20A-7-105** is amended to read:

20A-7-105. Manual petition processes -- Obtaining signatures -- Verification -- Submitting the petition -- Certification of signatures -- Transfer to lieutenant governor -- Removal of signature.

(1) This section applies only to the manual initiative process and the manual referendum process.

(2) As used in this section:

(a) "Local petition" means:

(i) a manual local initiative petition described in Part 5, Local Initiatives - Procedures; or

(ii) a manual local referendum petition described in Part 6, Local Referenda - Procedures.

(b) "Packet" means an initiative packet or referendum packet.

(c) "Petition" means a local petition or statewide petition.

(d) "Statewide petition" means:

(i) a manual statewide initiative petition described in Part 2, Statewide Initiatives; or

(ii) a manual statewide referendum petition described in Part 3, Statewide Referenda.

(3)

(a) A Utah voter may sign a statewide petition if the voter is a legal voter.

(b) A Utah voter may sign a local petition if the voter:

(i) is a legal voter; and

(ii) resides in the local jurisdiction.

(4)

(a) The sponsors shall ensure that the individual in whose presence each signature sheet was signed:

(i) is at least 18 years old;

(ii) verifies each signature sheet by completing the verification printed on the last page of each packet; and

(iii) is informed that each signer is required to read and understand:

(A) for an initiative petition, the law proposed by the initiative; or

(B) for a referendum petition, the law that the referendum seeks to overturn.

(b) An individual may not sign the verification printed on the last page of a packet if the individual signed a signature sheet in the packet.

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- 170 (5)
- (a) The sponsors, or an agent of the sponsors, shall submit a signed and verified packet to the county clerk of the county in which the packet was circulated before 5 p.m. no later than the earlier of:
- 173 (i) for a statewide initiative:
- 174 (A) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the first individual signs the initiative packet;
- 176 (B) the last business day that is no more than 316 calendar days after the day on which the application for the initiative petition is filed; or
- 178 (C) the February 15 immediately before the next regular general election immediately after the application is filed under Section 20A-7-202;
- 180 (ii) for a statewide referendum:
- 181 (A) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the first individual signs the referendum packet; or
- 183 (B) the first business day that is at least 40 calendar [-]days after the day on which the legislative session at which the law passed ends;
- 185 (iii) for a local initiative:
- 186 (A) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the first individual signs the initiative packet;
- 188 (B) the last business day that is no more than 316 calendar days after the day on which the application is filed;
- 190 (C) the April 15 immediately before the next regular general election immediately after the application is filed under Section 20A-7-502, if the local initiative is a county initiative; or
- 193 (D) the April 15 immediately before the next municipal general election immediately after the application is filed under Section 20A-7-502, if the local initiative is a municipal initiative; or
- 196 (iv) for a local referendum:
- 197 (A) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the first individual signs the referendum packet; or
- 199 (B) the first business day that is at least 45 calendar days after the day on which the sponsors receive the items described in Subsection 20A-7-604(3) from the local clerk.
- 202 (b) A person may not submit a packet after the applicable deadline described in Subsection (5)(a).
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(c) Before delivering an initiative packet to the county clerk under this Subsection (5), the sponsors shall send an email to each individual who provides a legible, valid email address on the signature sheet that includes the following:

(i) the subject of the email shall include the following statement, "Notice Regarding Your Petition Signature"; and

(ii) the body of the email shall include the following statement in 12-point type:

"You signed a petition for the following initiative:

[insert title of initiative]

To access a copy of the initiative petition, the initiative, the fiscal impact statement, and information on the deadline for removing your signature from the petition, please visit the following link: [insert a uniform resource locator that takes the individual directly to the page on the lieutenant governor's or county clerk's website that includes the information referred to in the email]."

(d) For a statewide initiative, the sponsors shall, no later than 5 p.m. on the day on which the sponsors submit the last initiative packet to the county clerk, submit to the lieutenant governor:

(i) a list containing:

(A) the name and email address of each individual the sponsors sent, or caused to be sent, the email described in Subsection (5)(c); and

(B) the date the email was sent;

(ii) a copy of the email described in Subsection (5)(c); and

(iii) the following written verification, completed and signed by each of the sponsors:

"Verification of initiative sponsor State of Utah, County of _____ I, _____, of _____, hereby state, under penalty of perjury, that:

I am a sponsor of the initiative petition entitled _____; and

I sent, or caused to be sent, to each individual who provided a legible, valid email address on a signature sheet submitted to the county clerk in relation to the initiative petition, the email described in Utah Code Subsection 20A-7-105(5)(c).

(Name) (Residence Address) (Date). "[:]

(e) For a local initiative, the sponsors shall, no later than 5 p.m. on the day on which the sponsors submit the last initiative packet to the local clerk, submit to the local clerk the items described in Subsection (5)(d).

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- 237 (f) Signatures gathered for an initiative petition are not valid if the sponsors do not comply with
Subsection (5)(c), (d), or (e).
- 239 (6)
- (a) Within 21 calendar days after the day on which the county clerk receives the packet, the county
clerk shall:
- 241 (i) use the procedures described in Section 20A-1-1002, or 20A-7-106 if applicable, to determine
whether each signer is a legal voter and, as applicable, the jurisdiction where the signer is
registered to vote;
- 244 (ii) for a statewide initiative or a statewide referendum:
- 245 (A) certify on the petition whether each name is that of a legal voter;
- 246 (B) post the name, voter identification number, and date of signature of each legal voter certified under
Subsection (6)(a)(ii)(A) on the lieutenant governor's website, in a conspicuous location designated
by the lieutenant governor; and
- 249 (C) deliver the verified packet to the lieutenant governor;
- 250 (iii) and
- 273 (iii) for a local initiative or a local referendum:
- 251 (A) certify on the petition whether each name is that of a legal voter who is registered in the jurisdiction
to which the initiative or referendum relates;
- 253 (B) post the name, voter identification number, and date of signature of each legal voter certified under
Subsection (6)(a)(iii)(A) on the lieutenant governor's website, in a conspicuous location designated
by the lieutenant governor; and
- 256 (C) deliver the verified packet to the local clerk.
- 257 (b) For a local initiative or local referendum, the local clerk shall post a link in a conspicuous location
on the local government's website to the posting described in Subsection (6)(a)(iii)(B):
- 260 (i) for a local initiative, during the period of time described in Subsection 20A-7-507(3)(a); or
- 262 (ii) for a local referendum, during the period of time described in Subsection 20A-7-607(2)(a)(i).
- 264 (7)
- (a) The county clerk may not certify a signature under Subsection ~~[(6)]~~ (6)(a):
- 265 ~~[(a)]~~ (i) on a packet that is not verified in accordance with Subsection (4); or
- 266 ~~[(b)]~~ (ii) that does not have a date of signature next to the signature.
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(b) A county clerk may not refuse to certify a signature under Subsection (6)(a) or otherwise reject the packet solely because the date written next to the signature contains a one-calendar-year error if the date, adjusted by one calendar year, would fall within the period that:

(i) begins on the day on which the first individual signs the packet under Subsection (5)(a); and

(ii) ends on the day on which the packet is submitted.

(c) Certification of a signature described in Subsection (7)(b) does not change the date on which the first individual signs the packet for purposes of calculating a deadline under Subsection (5)(a).

(8)

(a) A voter who signs a statewide initiative petition may have the voter's signature removed from the petition by, in accordance with Section 20A-1-1003, submitting to the county clerk a statement requesting that the voter's signature be removed no later than 5 p.m. the earlier of:

(i) for an initiative packet received by the county clerk before December 1:

(A) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the voter signs the signature removal statement; or

(B) the first business day that is at least 90 calendar days after the day on which the lieutenant governor posts the voter's name under Subsection 20A-7-207(2); or

(ii) for an initiative packet received by the county clerk on or after December 1:

(A) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the voter signs the signature removal statement; or

(B) the first business day that is at least 45 calendar days after the day on which the lieutenant governor posts the voter's name under Subsection 20A-7-207(2).

(b) A voter who signs a statewide referendum petition may have the voter's signature removed from the petition by, in accordance with Section 20A-1-1003, submitting to the county clerk a statement requesting that the voter's signature be removed no later than 5 p.m. the earlier of:

(i) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the voter signs the statement requesting removal; or

(ii) the first business day that is at least 45 calendar days after the day on which the lieutenant governor posts the voter's name under Subsection 20A-7-307(2).

(c) A voter who signs a local initiative petition may have the voter's signature removed from the petition by, in accordance with Section 20A-1-1003, submitting to the county clerk a statement requesting that the voter's signature be removed no later than 5 p.m. the earlier of:

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- 294 (i) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the voter signs the
signature removal statement;
- 296 (ii) the first business day that is at least 90 calendar days after the day on which the local clerk posts the
voter's name under Subsection 20A-7-507(2);
- 298 (iii) the last business day that is no more than 316 calendar days after the day on which the application
is filed; or
- 300 (iv)
- (A) for a county initiative, April 15 immediately before the next regular general election immediately
after the application is filed under Section 20A-7-502; or
- 303 (B) for a municipal initiative, April 15 immediately before the next municipal general election
immediately after the application is filed under Section 20A-7-502.
- 306 (d) A voter who signs a local referendum petition may have the voter's signature removed from the
petition by, in accordance with Section 20A-1-1003, submitting to the county clerk a statement
requesting that the voter's signature be removed no later than 5 p.m. the earlier of:
- 310 (i) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the voter signs the
statement requesting removal; or
- 312 (ii) the first business day that is at least 45 calendar days after the day on which the local clerk posts the
voter's name under Subsection 20A-7-607(2)(a).
- 314 (e) In order for the signature to be removed, the county clerk must receive the statement described in
this Subsection (8) before 5 p.m. no later than the applicable deadline described in this Subsection
(8).
- 317 (f) A county clerk shall analyze a signature, for purposes of removing a signature from a petition, in
accordance with Subsection 20A-1-1003(3).
- 319 (9)
- (a) If the county clerk timely receives a statement requesting signature removal under Subsection
(8) and determines that the signature should be removed from the petition under Subsection
20A-1-1003(3), the county clerk shall:
- 322 (i) ensure that the voter's name, voter identification number, and date of signature are not included
in the posting described in Subsection (6)(a)(ii)(B) or (iii)(B); and
- 324 (ii) remove the voter's signature from the signature packets and signature packet totals.
- 326 (b) The county clerk shall comply with Subsection (9)(a) before the later of:

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- (i) the deadline described in Subsection (6)(a); or
- (ii) two business days after the day on which the county clerk receives a statement requesting signature removal under Subsection (8).
- (10) A person may not retrieve a packet from a county clerk, or make any alterations or corrections to a packet, after the packet is submitted to the county clerk.
- (11) A person may not use an email address provided by the signer of an initiative petition or a referendum petition for any purpose other than a purpose described in this chapter.
- Section 4. Section **20A-7-106** is amended to read:
- 20A-7-106. Petition signature or removal for an individual with a disability.**
- (1) If a voter who desires to sign a petition is, due to a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act, unable to fill out the signature sheet or to sign the voter's name consistently, the voter may:
- (a) inform the individual gathering signatures that, due to a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the voter is unable to fill out the signature sheet or to sign the voter's name consistently; and
- (b) direct the individual gathering signatures to:
- (i) fill out the form on the signature sheet with the information provided by the voter; and
- (ii) in place of the registered voter's signature:
- (A) place the initials "AV" to indicate that the county clerk must use an alternate verification process to verify the validity of the voter's signature; and
- (B) place next to the initials described in Subsection (1)(b)(ii)(A) a phone number, email address, or other method that the county clerk may use to contact the voter to verify the identity of the voter.
- (2) If a voter who desires to remove the voter's signature from a petition is, due to a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act, unable to sign the voter's name consistently, the voter may, instead of signing the statement described in Section 20A-1-1003:
- (a) place the initials "AV" to indicate that the county clerk must use an alternate verification process to verify the validity of the voter's signature; and
- (b) include in the statement a phone number, email address, or other method that the county clerk may use to contact the voter to verify the identity of the voter.

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(3) An individual who, in the course of gathering a signature under Subsection (1) or gathering a statement requesting removal of a signature under Subsection (2), obtains a voter's email address may not use the email address for any purpose.

~~[(3)]~~ (4) The alternate verification process described in this section includes:

(a) the process described in Subsection 20A-3a-401(9)(b); or

(b) another process established by rule, made by the director of elections within the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act.

Section 5. Section **20A-7-213** is amended to read:

20A-7-213. Misconduct of electors and officers -- Penalty.

(1) It is unlawful for an individual to:

(a) sign any name other than the individual's own to an initiative petition or a statement described in Subsection 20A-7-105(8) or 20A-7-216(4);

(b) knowingly sign the individual's name more than once for the same initiative at one election;

(c) knowingly indicate that an individual who signed an initiative petition signed the initiative petition on a date other than the date that the individual signed the initiative petition;

(d) sign an initiative petition knowing the individual is not a legal voter; or

~~[(e) on behalf of a voter described in Section 20A-7-106, place the initials "AV" or enter any information on a signature sheet or statement described in Section 20A-7-106, if the individual:]~~

~~[(i) does not obtain the voluntary direction or consent of the voter;]~~

~~[(ii) believes or has reason to believe that the voter lacks the mental capacity to give the voter's direction or consent;]~~

~~[(iii) believes or has reason to believe that the voter does not understand the purpose or nature of the action taken by the individual on behalf of the voter;]~~

~~[(iv) intentionally or knowingly deceives the voter into providing the direction or consent of the voter; or]~~

~~[(v) intentionally or knowingly enters false information on the signature sheet or statement; or]~~

~~[(f)]~~ (e) knowingly and willfully violate any provision of this part.

(2) It is unlawful for an individual to sign the verification for an initiative packet, or to electronically sign the verification for a signature under Subsection 20A-21-201(10), knowing that:

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(a) the signature date associated with the individual's signature for the initiative petition is not the date that the individual signed the initiative petition;

(b) the individual has not witnessed the signatures of those individuals whose signatures the individual collects or submits; or

(c) one or more individuals who signed the initiative petition are not registered to vote in Utah.

(3) It is unlawful for an individual to:

(a) pay an individual to sign an initiative petition;

~~[(b) pay an individual to remove the individual's signature from an initiative petition;]~~

~~(b) pay an individual, or provide or offer to provide money, prepaid postage, or any other direct financial benefit to an individual, to remove the individual's signature from an initiative petition;~~

~~(c) accept payment to sign an initiative petition;[-or]~~

~~(d) accept payment to have the individual's name removed from an initiative petition[-:] ;~~

~~(e) make a misrepresentation that is likely to deceive, or misrepresent that the individual is affiliated with{,-} or acting on behalf of{,-} a governmental entity , while the individual gathers or attempts to gather:~~

~~(i) a signature for an initiative petition; or~~

~~(ii) a statement described in Section 20A-1-1003 requesting removal of a signature from an initiative petition; or~~

~~(f) on behalf of a voter described in Section 20A-7-106, place the initials "AV" or enter any information on a signature sheet or statement described in Section 20A-7-106, if the individual:~~

~~(i) does not obtain the voluntary direction or consent of the voter;~~

~~(ii) believes or has reason to believe that the voter lacks the mental capacity to give the voter's direction or consent;~~

~~(iii) believes or has reason to believe that the voter does not understand the purpose or nature of the action taken by the individual on behalf of the voter;~~

~~(iv) intentionally or knowingly deceives the voter into providing the direction or consent of the voter; or~~

~~(v) intentionally or knowingly enters false information on the signature sheet or statement.~~

(4) A violation of this section is a class A misdemeanor.

Section 6. Section 20A-7-216 is amended to read:

20A-7-216. Electronic initiative process -- Obtaining signatures -- Request to remove signature.

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- 463 (1) This section applies to the electronic initiative process.
- 464 (2) A Utah voter may sign an initiative petition if the voter is a legal voter.
- 465 (3) The sponsors shall ensure that the signature-gatherer who collects a signature from an individual:
- 467 (a) verifies that the individual is at least 18 years old and meets the residency requirements of Section 20A-2-105; and
- 469 (b) is informed that each signer is required to read and understand the law proposed by the initiative.
- 471 (4) A voter who signs an initiative petition may have the voter's signature removed from the initiative petition by, in accordance with Section 20A-1-1003, submitting to the county clerk a statement requesting that the voter's signature be removed before 5 p.m. no later than the earlier of:
- 475 (a) for an electronic signature gathered before December 1:
- 476 (i) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the voter signs the signature removal statement; or
- 478 (ii) the first business day that is at least 90 calendar days after the day on which the county clerk posts the voter's name under Subsection 20A-7-217(4); or
- 480 (b) for an electronic signature gathered on or after December 1:
- 481 (i) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the voter signs the signature removal statement; or
- 483 (ii) the first business day that is at least 45 calendar days after the day on which the county clerk posts the voter's name under Subsection 20A-7-217(4).
- 485 (5)
- (a)
- (i) A voter may not submit a signature removal statement described in Subsection (4) by mail using prepaid postage, email, or other electronic means~~[, unless the lieutenant governor establishes a signature removal process that is consistent with the requirements of this section and Section 20A-21-201].~~
- 489 (ii) Notwithstanding Subsection (5)(a)(i), a county clerk may accept a signature removal statement submitted by mail using prepaid postage if the statement is postmarked on or before the effective date of this bill.
- 492 (b) A person may only remove an electronic signature from an initiative petition in accordance with this section.
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(c) A county clerk shall analyze a holographic signature, for purposes of removing an electronic signature from an initiative petition, in accordance with Subsection 20A-1-1003(3).

Section 7. Section **20A-7-312** is amended to read:

20A-7-312. Misconduct of electors and officers -- Penalty.

(1) It is unlawful for any person to:

- (a) sign any name other than the person's own to a referendum petition;
- (b) knowingly sign the person's name more than once for the same referendum petition at one election;
- (c) knowingly indicate that a person who signed a referendum petition signed the referendum petition on a date other than the date that the person signed the petition;
- (d) sign a referendum petition knowing the person is not a legal voter; or
- (e) knowingly and willfully violate any provision of this part.

(2) It is unlawful for any person to sign the verification for a referendum packet, or to electronically sign the verification for a signature under Subsection 20A-21-201(10) knowing that:

- (a) the signature date associated with the person's signature for the referendum petition is not the date that the person signed the referendum petition;
- (b) the person has not witnessed the signatures of those persons whose signatures the person collects or submits; or
- (c) one or more individuals who sign the referendum petition are not registered to vote in Utah.

(3) It is unlawful for ~~[any person]~~ an individual to:

- (a) pay ~~[a person]~~ an individual to sign a referendum petition;
- ~~[(b) pay a person to remove the person's signature from a referendum petition;]~~
- (b) pay an individual, or provide or offer to provide money, prepaid postage, or any other direct financial benefit to an individual, to remove the individual's signature from a referendum petition;
- (c) accept payment to sign a referendum petition;
- (d) accept payment to have the ~~[person's]~~ individual's name removed from a referendum petition;~~[-or]~~
- (e) ~~make a misrepresentation that is likely to deceive, or~~ misrepresent that the individual is affiliated with{,-} or acting on behalf of{,-} a governmental entity , while the individual gathers or attempts to gather:
 - (i) a signature for a referendum petition; or
 - (ii) a statement described in Section 20A-1-1003 requesting removal of a signature from a referendum petition; or

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- 459 [(e)] (f) on behalf of a voter described in Section 20A-7-106, place the initials "AV" or enter any
information on a signature sheet or statement described in Section 20A-7-106, if the individual:
- 462 (i) does not obtain the voluntary direction or consent of the voter;
- 463 (ii) believes or has reason to believe that the voter lacks the mental capacity to give the voter's direction
or consent;
- 465 (iii) believes or has reason to believe that the voter does not understand the purpose or nature of the
action taken by the individual on behalf of the voter;
- 467 (iv) intentionally or knowingly deceives the voter into providing the direction or consent of the voter; or
- 469 (v) intentionally or knowingly enters false information on the signature sheet or statement.
- 471 (4) Any person violating this section is guilty of a class A misdemeanor.

544 Section 8. Section 20A-7-314 is amended to read:

545 **20A-7-314. Electronic referendum process -- Obtaining signatures -- Request to remove
signature.**

- 547 (1) This section applies to the electronic referendum process.
- 548 (2) A Utah voter may sign a referendum petition if the voter is a legal voter.
- 549 (3) The sponsors shall ensure that the signature-gatherer who collects a signature from an individual:
- 551 (a) verifies that the individual is at least 18 years old and meets the residency requirements of Section
20A-2-105; and
- 553 (b) is informed that each signer is required to read and understand the law that is the subject of the
referendum petition.
- 555 (4) A voter who signs a referendum petition may have the voter's signature removed from the
referendum petition by, in accordance with Section 20A-1-1003, submitting to the county clerk a
statement requesting that the voter's signature be removed before 5 p.m. no later than the earlier of:
- 559 (a) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the voter signs the
statement requesting removal; or
- 561 (b) the first business day that is at least 45 calendar days after the day on which the lieutenant governor
posts the voter's name under Subsection 20A-7-315(4).
- 563 (5)
- (a)
- (i) A voter may not submit a signature removal statement described in Subsection (4) by mail using
prepaid postage, email, or other electronic means[, unless the lieutenant governor establishes a

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signature removal process that is consistent with the requirements of this section and Section 20A-21-201].

(ii) Notwithstanding Subsection (5)(a)(i), a county clerk may accept a signature removal statement submitted by mail using prepaid postage if the statement is postmarked on or before the effective date of this bill.

(b) A person may only remove an electronic signature from a referendum petition in accordance with this section.

(c) A county clerk shall analyze a holographic signature, for purposes of removing an electronic signature from a referendum petition, in accordance with Subsection 20A-1-1003(3).

Section 9. Section **20A-7-512** is amended to read:

20A-7-512. Misconduct of electors and officers -- Penalty.

(1) It is unlawful for any individual to:

(a) sign any name other than the individual's own name to an initiative petition or a statement described in Subsection 20A-7-105(8) or 20A-7-515(4);

(b) knowingly sign the individual's name more than once for the same initiative at one election;

(c) knowingly indicate that an individual who signed an initiative petition signed the initiative petition on a date other than the date that the individual signed the initiative petition;

(d) sign an initiative petition knowing the individual is not a legal voter; or

(e) knowingly and willfully violate any provision of this part.

(2) It is unlawful for an individual to sign the verification for an initiative packet, or to electronically sign the verification for a signature under Subsection 20A-21-201(10), knowing that:

(a) the signature date associated with the individual's signature for the initiative petition is not the date that the individual signed the initiative petition;

(b) the individual has not witnessed the signatures of the individuals whose signatures the individual collects or submits; or

(c) one or more individuals who signed the initiative petition are not registered to vote in Utah.

(3) It is unlawful for an individual to:

(a) pay an individual to sign an initiative petition;

~~[(b) pay an individual to remove the individual's signature from an initiative petition;]~~

(b) pay an individual, or provide or offer to provide money, prepaid postage, or any other direct financial benefit to an individual, to remove the individual's signature from an initiative petition;

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- 499 (c) accept payment to sign an initiative petition;
- 500 (d) accept payment to have the individual's name removed from an initiative petition;[-ør]
- 501 (e) make a misrepresentation that is likely to deceive, or misrepresent that the individual is affiliated
with{-} or acting on behalf of{-} a governmental entity , while the individual gathers or attempts to
gather:
- 503 (i) a signature for an initiative petition; or
- 504 (ii) a statement described in Section 20A-1-1003 requesting removal of a signature from an initiative
petition; or
- 506 [(e)] (f) on behalf of a voter described in Section 20A-7-106, place the initials "AV" or enter any
information on a signature sheet or statement described in Section 20A-7-106, if the individual:
- 509 (i) does not obtain the voluntary direction or consent of the voter;
- 510 (ii) believes or has reason to believe that the voter lacks the mental capacity to give the voter's direction
or consent;
- 512 (iii) believes or has reason to believe that the voter does not understand the purpose or nature of the
action taken by the individual on behalf of the voter;
- 514 (iv) intentionally or knowingly deceives the voter into providing the direction or consent of the voter; or
- 516 (v) intentionally or knowingly enters false information on the signature sheet or statement.
- 518 (4) A violation of this section is a class A misdemeanor.
- 623 Section 10. Section 20A-7-515 is amended to read:
- 624 **20A-7-515. Electronic initiative process -- Obtaining signatures -- Request to remove**
signature.
- 626 (1) This section applies to the electronic initiative process.
- 627 (2) A Utah voter may sign a local initiative petition if the voter is a legal voter and resides in the local
jurisdiction.
- 629 (3) The sponsors shall ensure that the signature-gatherer who collects a signature from an individual:
- 631 (a) verifies that the individual is at least 18 years old and meets the residency requirements of Section
20A-2-105; and
- 633 (b) is informed that each signer is required to read and understand the law proposed by the initiative.
- 635 (4)

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- (a) A voter who signs an initiative petition may have the voter's signature removed from the initiative petition by, in accordance with Section 20A-1-1003, submitting to the county clerk a statement requesting that the voter's signature be removed before 5 p.m. no later than the earlier of:
- (i) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the voter signs the signature removal statement;
 - (ii) the first business day that is at least 90 calendar days after the day on which the local clerk posts the voter's name under Subsection 20A-7-516(4);
 - (iii) the first business day that is at least 316 calendar days after the day on which the initiative application is filed; or
 - (iv)
- (A) for a county initiative, April 15 immediately before the next regular general election immediately after the initiative application is filed under Section 20A-7-502; or
- (B) for a municipal initiative, April 15 immediately before the next municipal general election immediately after the initiative application is filed under Section 20A-7-502.
- (b)
- (i) A voter may not submit a signature removal statement described in Subsection (4)(a) by mail using prepaid postage, email, or other electronic means~~[- unless the lieutenant governor establishes a signature removal process that is consistent with the requirements of this section and Section 20A-21-201].~~
 - (ii) Notwithstanding Subsection (4)(b)(i), a county clerk may accept a signature removal statement submitted by mail using prepaid postage if the statement is postmarked on or before the effective date of this bill.
- (c) A person may only remove an electronic signature from an initiative petition in accordance with this section.
- (d) A county clerk shall analyze a holographic signature, for purposes of removing an electronic signature from an initiative petition, in accordance with Subsection 20A-1-1003(3).
- Section 11. Section **20A-7-612** is amended to read:
- 20A-7-612. Misconduct of electors and officers -- Penalty.**
- (1) It is unlawful for an individual to:
 - (a) sign a name other than the individual's own name to any referendum petition;
 - (b) knowingly sign the individual's name more than once for the same referendum at one election;

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- 525 (c) knowingly indicate that an individual who signed a referendum petition signed the referendum
petition on a date other than the date that the individual signed the referendum petition;
- 528 (d) sign a referendum petition knowing that the individual is not a legal voter;
- 529 (e) in connection with circulating a referendum petition, represent that a document is an official
government document if the individual knows or has reason to know that the document is not an
official government document; or
- 532 (f) knowingly and willfully violate any provision of this part.
- 533 (2) It is unlawful for an individual to sign the verification for a referendum packet, or to electronically
sign the verification for a signature under Subsection 20A-21-201(10), knowing that:
- 536 (a) the signature date associated with the individual's signature for the referendum petition is not the
date that the individual signed the referendum petition;
- 538 (b) the individual has not witnessed the signatures the individual collects or submits; or
- 539 (c) one or more individuals whose signatures appear in the referendum packet is not registered to vote
in Utah.
- 541 (3) It is unlawful for an individual to:
- 542 (a) pay an individual to sign a referendum petition;
- 543 ~~[(b) pay an individual to remove the individual's signature from a referendum petition;]~~
- 544 ~~(b) pay an individual, or provide or offer to provide money, prepaid postage, or any other direct
financial benefit to an individual, to remove the individual's signature from a referendum petition;~~
- 547 (c) accept payment to sign a referendum petition;
- 548 (d) accept payment to have the individual's name removed from a referendum petition;~~[-or]~~
- 550 (e) make a misrepresentation that is likely to deceive, or misrepresent that the individual is affiliated
with{-} or acting on behalf of {-} a governmental entity , while the individual gathers or attempts to
gather:
- 552 (i) a signature for a referendum petition; or
- 553 (ii) a statement described in Section 20A-1-1003 requesting removal of a signature from a referendum
petition; or
- 555 ~~[(e)]~~ (f) on behalf of a voter described in Section 20A-7-106, place the initials "AV" or enter any
information on a signature sheet or statement described in Section 20A-7-106, if the individual:
- 558 (i) does not obtain the voluntary direction or consent of the voter;
- 559

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(ii) believes or has reason to believe that the voter lacks the mental capacity to give the voter's direction or consent;

(iii) believes or has reason to believe that the voter does not understand the purpose or nature of the action taken by the individual on behalf of the voter;

(iv) intentionally or knowingly deceives the voter into providing the direction or consent of the voter; or

(v) intentionally or knowingly enters false information on the signature sheet or statement.

(4) A violation of this section is a class A misdemeanor.

(5) The county attorney or municipal attorney shall prosecute any violation of this section.

Section 12. Section 20A-7-615 is amended to read:

20A-7-615. Electronic referendum process -- Obtaining signatures -- Request to remove signature.

(1) This section applies to the electronic referendum process described in Section 20A-21-201.

(2) A Utah voter may sign a local referendum petition if the voter is a legal voter and resides in the local jurisdiction.

(3) The sponsors shall ensure that the signature-gatherer who collects a signature from an individual:

(a) verifies that the individual is at least 18 years old and meets the residency requirements of Section 20A-2-105; and

(b) is informed that each signer is required to read and understand the law that is the subject of the referendum petition.

(4)

(a) A voter who signs a referendum petition may have the voter's signature removed from the referendum petition by, in accordance with Section 20A-1-1003, submitting to the county clerk a statement requesting that the voter's signature be removed before 5 p.m. no later than the earlier of:

(i) the first business day that is at least 30 calendar days after the day on which the voter signs the statement requesting removal; or

(ii) the first business day that is at least 45 calendar days after the day on which the local clerk posts the voter's name under Subsection 20A-7-616(3).

(b)

(i) A voter may not submit a signature removal statement described in Subsection (4)(a) by mail using prepaid postage, email, or other electronic means~~[- unless the lieutenant governor establishes a~~

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signature removal process that is consistent with the requirements of this section and Section 20A-21-201].

(ii) Notwithstanding Subsection (4)(b)(i), a county clerk may accept a signature removal statement submitted by mail using prepaid postage if the statement is postmarked on or before the effective date of this bill.

(c) A person may only remove an electronic signature from a referendum petition in accordance with this section.

(d) A county clerk shall analyze a holographic signature, for purposes of removing an electronic signature from a referendum petition, in accordance with Subsection 20A-1-1003(3).

Section 13. **Effective date.**

Effective Date.

This bill takes effect {on May 6, 2026.} :

(1) except as provided in Subsection (2), May 6, 2026; or

(2) if approved by two-thirds of all members elected to each house:

(a) upon approval by the governor;

(b) without the governor's signature, the day following the constitutional time limit of Utah Constitution, Article VII, Section 8; or

(c) in the case of a veto, the date of veto override.

Section 14. **Coordinating H.B. 242 with H.B. 32.**

If H.B. 242, Initiative and Referendum Signature Gathering and Removal Amendments, and H.B. 32, Signature Gathering and Verification Amendments, both pass and become law, the Legislature intends that, on May 6, 2026, Subsection 20A-7-105(7)(c), enacted in H.B. 32, be renumbered to Subsection 20A-7-105(7)(a)(iii) and be amended to read:

"(iii) except as provided in Subsection (7)(b), if the date of signature is later than the applicable deadline described in Subsection (5)(a)."

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