



Missouri House of Representatives

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Missouri House Passes HJR 86, Bringing Significant Reform to Initiative Petition Process

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – The Missouri House of Representatives has made a decisive move towards enhancing democracy with proposed crucial adjustments on how initiatives for constitutional amendments are handled in the Show-Me State. Sponsored by State Representative John Black, this resolution promises significant changes to Missouri's constitutional amendment process, reflecting a commitment to fair representation and citizen engagement.

Currently, initiative petitions proposing amendments to the Constitution require signatures from eight percent of the legal voters in two-thirds of the state's congressional districts in order to be placed on the ballot. HJR 86 would require signatures from eight percent of the legal voters in all of the state's congressional districts in order to place a Constitutional amendment proposed by initiative petition on the ballot. Additional changes include alterations to signature requirements, provisions for public input, eligibility criteria, and measures to safeguard against foreign influence.

The resolution protects the stability and integrity of the Missouri Constitution. HJR 86 aligns with the federal constitutional process, which requires ratification by a three-fourths majority of states for any amendment. Since 1791, this process has yielded 27 amendments, including the initial 10 amendments within the Bill of Rights. By comparison, the Missouri Constitution, one of the largest state constitutions, has been amended 122 times since 1945.

“I believe the amendment process for our U.S. constitution should serve as a lesson on how to address changes and growth in our state, while also protecting the integrity of our state constitution by ensuring amendments reflect principles supported by the people as a whole,” Rep. Black, R-Marshfield, said. “This legislation allows every county in the state the chance to be heard.”

“The Missouri Constitution is the sacrosanct compact upon which Missouri is built and is intended to enshrine our rights to life, liberty and to hold private property. Our state constitution is no less important than our federal constitution, and it should not be any easier to amend our constitution than the U.S. Constitution,” House Speaker Dean Plocher, R-Des Peres, said. “Unfortunately the initiative

petition process has been abused by out-of-state interests that mislead voters by confusing ballot language and needs reform."

Passing out of the House by a vote of 106-49, HJR 86 now moves to the Missouri Senate for further consideration.

Representative John Black, a Republican, represents Webster County (District 129) in the Missouri House of Representatives. He was elected to his first two-year term in November 2018. For more information, please contact Rep. Black's office at 573-751-1167 or via email at John.Black@House.Mo.Gov.

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