

HB 1869 -- Initiative and Referendum Petitions

Sponsor: Dugger

This bill changes the laws regarding initiative and referendum petitions. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Prohibits a person who has been convicted of, found guilty of or pled guilty to an offense involving forgery under the laws of Missouri or an offense in any other jurisdiction that would be considered forgery if committed in Missouri from qualifying as a petition circulator;

(2) Requires a petition circulator to indicate whether or not he or she is being compensated by predominantly displaying a sign or button stating that information. Any violation of this provision will be an infraction subject to a penalty of not less than \$100 but not more than \$500;

(3) Specifies that any person who knowingly signs any name other than his or her own to any petition will, upon conviction, be guilty of a class one election offense which is a felony. Currently, any person who signs any name other than his or her own to any petition is guilty of a class A misdemeanor;

(4) Requires the Joint Committee on Legislative Research to hold a public hearing in Jefferson City on a ballot measure within 30 days of the Secretary of State's certification to place the ballot measure on the ballot. The hearing will take public testimony in support and in opposition to the contents of the ballot measure;

(5) Reduces the time that the Secretary of State has to approve or disapprove the form of a ballot measure from 30 days to 15 days after submission; and

(6) Requires a petition circulator, within 45 days of the approval of the form of a ballot measure, to submit at least 1,000 but no more than 2,000 signatures to the Secretary of State to place a proposal on the ballot. If the Secretary of State verifies that at least 1,000 signatures are valid by sending them to the election authorities to be verified, then the proposal will be approved. The Secretary of State verifies signatures by sending them within five days to the election authorities who have 15 days to reply. The Secretary of State then has 23 days to prepare a summary statement. Signatures obtained prior to the date the official title is certified by the Secretary of State cannot be counted.

The provision requiring the Joint Committee on Legislative

Research to conduct a public hearing contains an emergency clause.