
HOUSE BILL 2612

State of Washington

61st Legislature

2010 Regular Session

By Representatives Armstrong, Kristiansen, and Kretz

Prefiled 01/08/10. Read first time 01/11/10. Referred to Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs.

1 AN ACT Relating to exempting signature petitions from disclosure;
2 amending RCW 29A.72.230; adding a new section to chapter 42.56 RCW; and
3 creating a new section.

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

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that a government that
6 protects the rights of people to share their true beliefs will better
7 represent the people it governs. The legislature further finds that
8 disclosure of signature petitions may chill the desire of citizens to
9 sign a petition and participate in the political process. The
10 legislature recognizes that signing a petition does not mean that a
11 person is in favor of or against a proposition being brought forward;
12 rather, it means that a person signing the petition believes the voters
13 in the state should have a right to decide the issue by a vote of the
14 people. The legislature finds it is more important to err through
15 protection and have more proposals sent to the people.

16 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 42.56 RCW
17 to read as follows:

1 Signature petitions for referenda and initiatives are exempt from
2 public inspection and copying.

3 **Sec. 3.** RCW 29A.72.230 and 2003 c 111 s 1823 are each amended to
4 read as follows:

5 Upon the filing of an initiative or referendum petition, the
6 secretary of state shall proceed to verify and canvass the names of the
7 legal voters on the petition. The verification and canvass of
8 signatures on the petition may be observed by persons representing the
9 advocates and opponents of the proposed measure so long as they make no
10 record of the names, addresses, or other information on the petitions
11 or related records during the verification process except upon the
12 order of the superior court of Thurston county. The secretary of state
13 may limit the number of observers to not less than two on each side, if
14 in his or her opinion, a greater number would cause undue delay or
15 disruption of the verification process. Any such limitation shall
16 apply equally to both sides. The secretary of state may use any
17 statistical sampling techniques for this verification and canvass which
18 have been adopted by rule as provided by chapter 34.05 RCW. No
19 petition will be rejected on the basis of any statistical method
20 employed, and no petition will be accepted on the basis of any
21 statistical method employed if such method indicates that the petition
22 contains fewer than the requisite number of signatures of legal voters.
23 If the secretary of state finds the same name signed to more than one
24 petition, he or she shall reject all but the first such valid
25 signature. For an initiative to the legislature, the secretary of
26 state shall transmit a certified copy of the proposed measure to the
27 legislature at the opening of its session and, as soon as the
28 signatures on the petition have been verified and canvassed, the
29 secretary of state shall send to the legislature a certificate of the
30 facts relating to the filing, verification, and canvass of the
31 petition.

32 Signature petitions are exempt from public inspection and copying
33 in accordance with section 2 of this act.

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