

Chapter 29A.72 RCW
STATE INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

Sections

- 29A.72.010 Filing proposed measures with secretary of state.
- 29A.72.020 Review of proposed initiatives—Certificate required.
- 29A.72.025 Fiscal impact statements.
- 29A.72.027 Public investment impact disclosures.
- 29A.72.028 Public investment impact disclosures—Appeal to superior court.
- 29A.72.030 Time for filing various types.
- 29A.72.040 Numbering—Transmittal to attorney general.
- 29A.72.050 Ballot title—Formulation, ballot display.
- 29A.72.060 Ballot title and summary by attorney general.
- 29A.72.070 Ballot title and summary—Notice.
- 29A.72.080 Ballot title and summary—Appeal to superior court.
- 29A.72.090 Ballot title and summary—Mailed to proponents and other persons—Appearance on petitions.
- 29A.72.100 Petitions—Paper—Size—Contents.
- 29A.72.110 Petitions to legislature—Form.
- 29A.72.120 Petitions to people—Form.
- 29A.72.130 Referendum petitions—Form.
- 29A.72.140 Warning statement—Further requirements.
- 29A.72.150 Petitions—Signatures—Number necessary.
- 29A.72.160 Petitions—Time for filing.
- 29A.72.170 Petitions—Acceptance or rejection by secretary of state.
- 29A.72.180 Petitions—Review of refusal to file.
- 29A.72.190 Petitions—Appellate review.
- 29A.72.200 Petitions—Destruction on final refusal.
- 29A.72.210 Petitions—Consolidation into volumes.
- 29A.72.230 Petitions—Verification and canvass of signatures, observers—Statistical sampling—Initiatives to legislature, certification of.
- 29A.72.240 Count of signatures—Review.
- 29A.72.250 Initiatives and referenda to the people—Certificates of sufficiency.
- 29A.72.260 Rejected initiatives to legislature.
- 29A.72.270 Alternatives to initiatives to the legislature.
- 29A.72.280 Concise description for alternative to initiative to the legislature.
- 29A.72.290 Printing ballot titles on ballots—Separate headings.

RCW 29A.72.010 Filing proposed measures with secretary of state.

If any legal voter of the state, either individually or on behalf of an organization, desires to petition the legislature to enact a proposed measure, or submit a proposed initiative measure to the people, or order that a referendum of all or part of any act, bill, or law, passed by the legislature be submitted to the people, he or she shall file with the secretary of state:

(1) A legible copy of the measure proposed, or the act or part of such act on which a referendum is desired;

(2) A signed affidavit, or electronic submission, that the sponsor is a registered voter; and

(3) A filing fee prescribed under RCW 43.07.120. [2015 c 72 s 10; 2003 c 111 s 1802; 1982 c 116 s 1; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.010. Prior: 1913 c 138 s 1, part; RRS s 5397, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.010.]

RCW 29A.72.020 Review of proposed initiatives—Certificate required. Upon receipt of a proposed initiative measure, and before giving it a serial number, the secretary of state shall submit a copy thereof to the office of the code reviser and give notice to the sponsor of such transmittal. Upon receipt of the measure, the assistant code reviser to whom it has been assigned may confer with the sponsor and shall within seven working days from its receipt, review the proposal and recommend to the sponsor such revision or alteration of the measure as may be deemed necessary and appropriate. The recommendations of the code reviser's office are advisory only, and the sponsor may accept or reject them in whole or in part. The code reviser shall issue a certificate of review certifying that he or she has reviewed the measure and that any recommendations have been communicated to the sponsor. The certificate must be issued whether or not the sponsor accepts such recommendations. Within fifteen working days after notification of submittal of the proposed measure to the code reviser's office, the sponsor, if he or she desires to proceed with sponsorship, shall file the measure together with the certificate of review with the secretary of state for assignment of a serial number, and the secretary of state shall then submit to the code reviser's office a certified copy of the measure filed. Upon submission of the proposal to the secretary of state for assignment of a serial number, the secretary of state shall refuse to make such assignment unless the proposal is accompanied by a certificate of review. [2003 c 111 s 1803; 1982 c 116 s 2; 1973 c 122 s 2. Formerly RCW 29.79.015.]

Legislative finding—1973 c 122: "The legislature finds that the initiative process reserving to the people the power to propose bills, laws and to enact or reject the same at the polls, independent of the legislature, is finding increased popularity with citizens of our state. The exercise of this power concomitant with the power of the legislature requires coordination to avoid the duplication and confusion of laws. This legislation is enacted especially to facilitate the operation of the initiative process." [1973 c 122 s 1.]

RCW 29A.72.025 Fiscal impact statements. The office of financial management, in consultation with the secretary of state, the attorney general, and any other appropriate state or local agency, shall prepare a fiscal impact statement for each of the following state ballot measures: (1) An initiative to the people that is certified to the ballot; (2) an initiative to the legislature that will appear on the ballot; (3) an alternative measure appearing on the ballot that the legislature proposes to an initiative to the legislature; (4) a referendum bill referred to voters by the legislature; and (5) a referendum measure appearing on the ballot. The secretary of state shall notify the office of financial management and the attorney general when the sponsor of a ballot measure has made an appointment to submit petitions to the secretary of state for filing. The office of financial management and appropriate state agencies may

begin work on a fiscal impact statement prior to the submission of petitions. Fiscal impact statements must be written in clear and concise language, avoid legal and technical terms when possible, and be filed with the secretary of state no later than July 23rd if a public investment impact disclosure is required under RCW 29A.72.027, and no later than July 31st for all other measures. Fiscal impact statements may include easily understood graphics.

A fiscal impact statement must describe any projected increase or decrease in revenues, costs, expenditures, or indebtedness that the state or local governments will experience if the ballot measure were approved by state voters. Where appropriate, a fiscal impact statement may include both estimated dollar amounts and a description placing the estimated dollar amounts into context. A fiscal impact statement must include both a summary of not to exceed one hundred words and a more detailed statement that includes the assumptions that were made to develop the fiscal impacts.

Fiscal impact statements must be available online from the secretary of state's website and included in the state voters' pamphlet. Additional information may be posted on the website of the office of financial management. [2022 c 114 s 5; 2009 c 415 s 7; 2004 c 266 s 4. Prior: 2002 c 139 s 1. Formerly RCW 29.79.075.]

Findings—2022 c 114: See note following RCW 29A.72.027.

Effective date—2004 c 266: See note following RCW 29A.04.575.

RCW 29A.72.027 Public investment impact disclosures. (1) The attorney general must prepare a public investment impact disclosure for any ballot measure that:

(a) Repeals, levies, or modifies any tax or fee, including changing the scope or application of an existing tax or fee; and
(b) Has a fiscal impact statement, as provided by RCW 29A.72.025, that shows that adoption of the measure would cause a net change in state revenue.

(2) The public investment impact disclosure must include a description of the investments that will be affected if the measure is adopted. The description must be sufficiently broad to reflect the subject of the investments that will be impacted by the change in revenue that will result from adoption of the measure, but also sufficiently precise to give notice of the subject matter of the investments that will be impacted by the change in revenue that will result from adoption of the measure. The description may not exceed 10 words, unless the fiscal impact is primarily to the state general fund, in which case the description must list the top three categories of state services funded by the general fund in the current state budget and may not exceed 15 words. The attorney general may consult with the office of financial management or any other state or local agencies as necessary to procure accurate information to draft the description.

(3) The format of the public investment impact disclosure, as it appears on the ballot, is:

"This measure would (increase or decrease) funding for (description of services)."

(4) In drafting the public investment impact disclosure, the attorney general must use neutral language that cannot reasonably be

expected to create prejudice for or against the measure. The language of the disclosure is not subject to appeal, except as provided in chapter 114, Laws of 2022.

(5) The attorney general must file the public investment impact disclosure with the secretary of state no later than July 23rd.

(6) The secretary of state must certify the public investment impact disclosure and timely transmit it to each county auditor for its inclusion on the ballot.

(7) Public investment impact disclosures are not considered part of the ballot title under this chapter and are not subject to any of the legal requirements for ballot titles. [2022 c 114 s 2.]

Findings—2022 c 114: "The legislature recognizes that the people have reserved for themselves the power to enact or reject legislation through the initiative and referendum process, as provided in Article II, section 1 of the state Constitution. The legislature finds that when exercising this right, the people are entitled to know the fiscal impact that their vote will have on public investments at the time they cast their ballots. The legislature further finds that when a ballot measure will affect funding for public investments, a neutral, nonprejudicial disclosure of the public investments affected will provide greater transparency and necessary information for voters." [2022 c 114 s 1.]

RCW 29A.72.028 Public investment impact disclosures—Appeal to superior court. Any persons, including either or both houses of the legislature, dissatisfied with the public investment impact disclosure for a state initiative or referendum may, within three days from the filing of the public investment impact disclosure in the office of the secretary of state, appeal to the superior court of Thurston county by petition setting forth the measure, the public investment impact disclosure, and their objections to the public investment impact disclosure and requesting amendment of the public investment impact disclosure by the court. Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays are not counted in calculating the time limits contained in this section.

A copy of the petition on appeal together with a notice that an appeal has been taken shall be served upon the secretary of state, upon the attorney general, and upon the person proposing the measure if the appeal is initiated by someone other than that person. Upon the filing of the petition on appeal or at the time to which the hearing may be adjourned by consent of the appellant, the court shall accord first priority to examining the proposed measure, the public investment impact disclosure, and the objections to that public investment impact disclosure, may hear arguments, and shall, within five days, render its decision and file with the secretary of state a certified copy of such public investment impact disclosure as it determines will meet the requirements of RCW 29A.72.027. The decision of the superior court shall be final. Such appeal shall be heard without costs to either party. [2022 c 114 s 6.]

Findings—2022 c 114: See note following RCW 29A.72.027.

RCW 29A.72.030 Time for filing various types. Initiative measures proposed to be submitted to the people must be filed with the

secretary of state within ten months prior to the election at which they are to be submitted, and the signature petitions must be filed with the secretary of state not less than four months before the next general statewide election.

Initiative measures proposed to be submitted to the legislature must be filed with the secretary of state within ten months prior to the next regular session of the legislature at which they are to be submitted, and the signature petitions must be filed with the secretary of state not less than ten days before such regular session of the legislature.

A referendum measure petition ordering that any act or part of an act passed by the legislature be referred to the people must be filed with the secretary of state within ninety days after the final adjournment of the legislative session at which the act was passed. It may be submitted at the next general statewide election or at a special election ordered by the legislature.

A proposed initiative or referendum measure may be filed no earlier than the opening of the secretary of state's office for business pursuant to RCW 42.04.060 on the first day filings are permitted, and any initiative or referendum petition must be filed not later than the close of business on the last business day in the specified period for submission of signatures. If a filing deadline falls on a Saturday, the office of the secretary of state must be open for the transaction of business under this section from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on that Saturday. [2003 c 111 s 1804; 1987 c 161 s 1; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.020. Prior: (i) 1913 c 138 s 1, part; RRS s 5397, part. (ii) 1913 c 138 s 6, part; RRS s 5402, part. (iii) 1913 c 138 s 5, part; RRS s 5401, part. (iv) 1913 c 138 s 7, part; RRS s 5403, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.020.]

Initiative, referendum, time for filing: State Constitution Art. 2 s 1 (a) and (d) (Amendment 7).

Petitions—Time for filing: RCW 29A.72.160.

RCW 29A.72.040 Numbering—Transmittal to attorney general. The secretary of state shall give a serial number to each initiative, referendum bill, or referendum measure, using a separate series for initiatives to the legislature, initiatives to the people, referendum bills, and referendum measures, and forthwith transmit one copy of the measure proposed bearing its serial number to the attorney general. Thereafter a measure shall be known and designated on all petitions, ballots, and proceedings as "Initiative Measure No. . . . ," "Referendum Bill No. . . . ," or "Referendum Measure No." [2023 c 109 s 4; 2008 c 1 s 7 (Initiative Measure No. 960, approved November 6, 2007); 2003 c 111 s 1805; 1982 c 116 s 3; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.030. Prior: 1913 c 138 s 1, part; RRS s 5397, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.030.]

Findings—2023 c 109: See note following RCW 29A.32.070.

Findings—Intent—Construction—Severability—Subheadings and part headings not law—Short title—Effective date—2008 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 960): See notes following RCW 43.135.031.

RCW 29A.72.050 Ballot title—Formulation, ballot display. (1)

The ballot title for an initiative to the people, an initiative to the legislature, a referendum bill, or a referendum measure consists of:

(a) A statement of the subject of the measure; (b) a concise description of the measure; and (c) a question in the form prescribed in this section for the ballot measure in question. The statement of the subject of a measure must be sufficiently broad to reflect the subject of the measure, sufficiently precise to give notice of the measure's subject matter, and not exceed ten words. The concise description must contain no more than thirty words, be a true and impartial description of the measure's essential contents, clearly identify the proposition to be voted on, and not, to the extent reasonably possible, create prejudice either for or against the measure.

(2) If a public investment impact disclosure is required under RCW 29A.72.027, the disclosure must appear in the middle of the ballot title, after the concise description and before the question. The disclosure is not, however, considered part of the ballot title and is not subject to any of the legal requirements for ballot titles under this chapter.

(3) For an initiative to the people, or for an initiative to the legislature for which the legislature has not proposed an alternative, the ballot title and public investment impact disclosure, if applicable, must be displayed on the ballot substantially as follows:

"Initiative Measure No. . . . concerns (statement of subject). This measure would (concise description). (Public investment impact disclosure, if applicable). Should this measure be enacted into law?

Yes
No

(4) For an initiative to the legislature for which the legislature has proposed an alternative, the ballot title and public investment impact disclosure, if applicable, must be displayed on the ballot substantially as follows:

"Initiative Measure Nos. . . . and . . .B concern (statement of subject).

Initiative Measure No. . . . would (concise description). (Public investment impact disclosure, if applicable).

As an alternative, the legislature has proposed Initiative Measure No. . . .B, which would (concise description). (Public investment impact disclosure, if applicable).

1. Should either of these measures be enacted into law?

Yes
No

2. Regardless of whether you voted yes or no above, if one of these measures is enacted, which one should it be?

Measure No.
or

Measure No.

(5) For a referendum bill submitted to the people by the legislature, the ballot issue and public investment impact disclosure, if applicable, must be displayed on the ballot substantially as follows:

"The legislature has passed Bill No. . . . concerning (statement of subject). This bill would (concise description). (Public investment impact disclosure, if applicable). Should this bill be:

Approved

Rejected

(6) For a referendum measure by state voters on a bill the legislature has passed, the ballot issue and public investment impact disclosure, if applicable, must be displayed on the ballot substantially as follows:

"The legislature passed . . . Bill No. . . . concerning (statement of subject) and voters have filed a sufficient referendum petition on this bill. This bill would (concise description). (Public investment impact disclosure, if applicable). Should this bill be:

Approved

Rejected

(7) The legislature may specify the statement of subject or concise description, or both, in a referendum bill that it refers to the people. The legislature may specify the concise description for an alternative it submits for an initiative to the legislature. If the legislature fails to specify these matters, the attorney general shall prepare the material that was not specified. The statement of subject and concise description as so provided must be included as part of the ballot title unless changed on appeal.

The attorney general shall specify the statement of subject and concise description for an initiative to the people, an initiative to the legislature, and a referendum measure. The statement of subject and concise description as so provided must be included as part of the ballot title unless changed on appeal. [2022 c 114 s 3; 2003 c 111 s 1806. Prior: 2000 c 197 s 1. Formerly RCW 29.79.035.]

Findings—2022 c 114: See note following RCW 29A.72.027.

Part headings not law—2000 c 197: "Part headings used in this act are not part of the law." [2000 c 197 s 17.]

RCW 29A.72.060 Ballot title and summary by attorney general.

Within five days after the receipt of an initiative or referendum the attorney general shall formulate the ballot title, or portion of the ballot title that the legislature has not provided, required by RCW 29A.72.050 and a summary of the measure, not to exceed seventy-five words, and transmit the serial number for the measure, complete ballot title, and summary to the secretary of state. Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays are not counted in calculating the time limits in this section. [2003 c 111 s 1807. Prior: 2000 c 197 s 2; 1993 c 256 s 9;

1982 c 116 s 4; 1973 1st ex.s. c 118 s 2; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.040; prior: 1953 c 242 s 2; 1913 c 138 s 2; RRS s 5398. Formerly RCW 29.79.040.]

Part headings not law—2000 c 197: See note following RCW 29A.72.050.

Severability—Effective date—1993 c 256: See notes following RCW 29A.84.280.

Ballot titles to other state and local measures: RCW 29A.36.020 through 29A.36.090.

RCW 29A.72.070 Ballot title and summary—Notice. Upon the filing of the ballot title and summary for a state initiative or referendum measure in the office of secretary of state, the secretary of state shall notify by telephone and by mail, and, if requested, by other electronic means, the person proposing the measure, the prime sponsor of a referendum bill or alternative to an initiative to the legislature, the chief clerk of the house of representatives, the secretary of the senate, and any other individuals who have made written request for such notification of the exact language of the ballot title and summary. [2003 c 111 s 1808. Prior: 2000 c 197 s 3; 1982 c 116 s 5; 1973 1st ex.s. c 118 s 3; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.050; prior: 1913 c 138 s 3, part; RRS s 5399, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.050.]

Part headings not law—2000 c 197: See note following RCW 29A.72.050.

RCW 29A.72.080 Ballot title and summary—Appeal to superior court. Any persons, including the attorney general or either or both houses of the legislature, dissatisfied with the ballot title or summary for a state initiative or referendum may, within five days from the filing of the ballot title in the office of the secretary of state, appeal to the superior court of Thurston county by petition setting forth the measure, the ballot title or summary, and their objections to the ballot title or summary and requesting amendment of the ballot title or summary by the court. Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays are not counted in calculating the time limits contained in this section.

A copy of the petition on appeal together with a notice that an appeal has been taken shall be served upon the secretary of state, upon the attorney general, and upon the person proposing the measure if the appeal is initiated by someone other than that person. Upon the filing of the petition on appeal or at the time to which the hearing may be adjourned by consent of the appellant, the court shall accord first priority to examining the proposed measure, the ballot title or summary, and the objections to that ballot title or summary, may hear arguments, and shall, within five days, render its decision and file with the secretary of state a certified copy of such ballot title or summary as it determines will meet the requirements of RCW 29A.72.060. The decision of the superior court shall be final. Such appeal shall be heard without costs to either party. [2013 c 11 s 73; 2003 c 111 s 1809. Prior: 2000 c 197 s 4; 1982 c 116 s 6; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.060;

prior: 1913 c 138 s 3, part; RRS s 5399, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.060.]

Part headings not law—2000 c 197: See note following RCW 29A.72.050.

RCW 29A.72.090 Ballot title and summary—Mailed to proponents and other persons—Appearance on petitions. When the ballot title and summary are finally established, the secretary of state shall file the instrument establishing it with the proposed measure and transmit a copy thereof by mail to the person proposing the measure, the chief clerk of the house of representatives, the secretary of the senate, and to any other individuals who have made written request for such notification. Thereafter such ballot title shall be the title of the measure in all petitions, ballots, and other proceedings in relation thereto. The summary shall appear on all petitions directly following the ballot title. [2003 c 111 s 1810. Prior: 2000 c 197 s 5; 1982 c 116 s 7; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.070; prior: 1913 c 138 s 4, part; RRS s 5400, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.070.]

Part headings not law—2000 c 197: See note following RCW 29A.72.050.

RCW 29A.72.100 Petitions—Paper—Size—Contents. The person proposing the measure shall print blank petitions upon single sheets of paper of good writing quality (including but not limited to newsprint) not less than eleven inches in width and not less than fourteen inches in length. Each petition at the time of circulating, signing, and filing with the secretary of state must consist of not more than one sheet with numbered lines for not more than twenty signatures, with the prescribed warning and title, be in the form required by RCW 29A.72.110, 29A.72.120, or 29A.72.130, and have a readable, full, true, and correct copy of the proposed measure printed on the reverse side of the petition. [2003 c 111 s 1811; 1982 c 116 s 8; 1973 1st ex.s. c 118 s 4; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.080. Prior: (i) 1913 c 138 s 4, part; RRS s 5400, part. (ii) 1913 c 138 s 9; RRS s 5405. Formerly RCW 29.79.080.]

RCW 29A.72.110 Petitions to legislature—Form. Petitions for proposing measures for submission to the legislature at its next regular session must be substantially in the following form:

The warning prescribed by RCW 29A.72.140; followed by:

INITIATIVE PETITION FOR SUBMISSION TO THE LEGISLATURE

To the Honorable, Secretary of State of the State of Washington:

We, the undersigned citizens and legal voters of the State of Washington, respectfully direct that this petition and the proposed measure known as Initiative Measure No. and entitled (here set forth the established ballot title of the measure), a full, true, and correct copy of which is printed on the reverse side of this petition, be transmitted to the legislature of the State of Washington at its next ensuing regular session, and we respectfully petition the

legislature to enact said proposed measure into law; and each of us for himself or herself says: I have personally signed this petition; I am a legal voter of the State of Washington in the city (or town) and county written after my name, my residence address is correctly stated, and I have knowingly signed this petition only once.

The following declaration must be printed on the reverse side of the petition:

I,, swear or affirm under penalty of law that I circulated this sheet of the foregoing petition, and that, to the best of my knowledge, every person who signed this sheet of the foregoing petition knowingly and without any compensation or promise of compensation willingly signed his or her true name and that the information provided therewith is true and correct. I further acknowledge that under chapter 29A.84 RCW, forgery of signatures on this petition constitutes a class C felony, and that offering any consideration or gratuity to any person to induce them to sign a petition is a gross misdemeanor, such violations being punishable by fine or imprisonment or both.

RCW 9A.46.020 applies to any conduct constituting harassment against a petition signature gatherer. This penalty does not preclude the victim from seeking any other remedy otherwise available under law.

The petition must include a place for each petitioner to sign and print his or her name, and the address, city, and county at which he or she is registered to vote. [2005 c 239 s 1; 2003 c 111 s 1812; 1982 c 116 s 9; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.090. Prior: 1913 c 138 s 5, part; RRS s 5401, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.090.]

Effective date—2005 c 239: "This act takes effect January 1, 2006." [2005 c 239 s 4.]

RCW 29A.72.120 Petitions to people—Form. Petitions for proposing measures for submission to the people for their approval or rejection at the next ensuing general election must be substantially in the following form:

The warning prescribed by RCW 29A.72.140; followed by:

INITIATIVE PETITION FOR SUBMISSION TO THE PEOPLE

To the Honorable, Secretary of State of the State of Washington:

We, the undersigned citizens and legal voters of the State of Washington, respectfully direct that the proposed measure known as Initiative Measure No., entitled (here insert the established ballot title of the measure), a full, true and correct copy of which is printed on the reverse side of this petition, be submitted to the legal voters of the State of Washington for their approval or rejection at the general election to be held on the day of November, (year); and each of us for himself or herself says: I have personally signed this petition; I am a legal voter of the State of Washington, in the city (or town) and county written after my name, my residence address is correctly stated, and I have knowingly signed this petition only once.

The following declaration must be printed on the reverse side of the petition:

I,, swear or affirm under penalty of law that I circulated this sheet of the foregoing petition, and that, to the best of my knowledge, every person who signed this sheet of the foregoing petition knowingly and without any compensation or promise of compensation willingly signed his or her true name and that the information provided therewith is true and correct. I further acknowledge that under chapter 29A.84 RCW, forgery of signatures on this petition constitutes a class C felony, and that offering any consideration or gratuity to any person to induce them to sign a petition is a gross misdemeanor, such violations being punishable by fine or imprisonment or both.

RCW 9A.46.020 applies to any conduct constituting harassment against a petition signature gatherer. This penalty does not preclude the victim from seeking any other remedy otherwise available under law.

The petition must include a place for each petitioner to sign and print his or her name, and the address, city, and county at which he or she is registered to vote. [2005 c 239 s 2; 2003 c 111 s 1813; 1982 c 116 s 10; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.100. Prior: 1913 c 138 s 6, part; RRS s 5402, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.100.]

Effective date—2005 c 239: See note following RCW 29A.72.110.

RCW 29A.72.130 Referendum petitions—Form. Petitions ordering that acts or parts of acts passed by the legislature be referred to the people at the next ensuing general election, or special election ordered by the legislature, must be substantially in the following form:

The warning prescribed by RCW 29A.72.140; followed by:

PETITION FOR REFERENDUM

To the Honorable, Secretary of State of the State of Washington:

We, the undersigned citizens and legal voters of the State of Washington, respectfully order and direct that Referendum Measure No., filed to revoke a (or part or parts of a) bill that (concise statement required by RCW 29A.72.050) and that was passed by the legislature of the State of Washington at the last regular (special) session of said legislature, shall be referred to the people of the state for their approval or rejection at the regular (special) election to be held on the day of November, (year); and each of us for himself or herself says: I have personally signed this petition; I am a legal voter of the State of Washington, in the city (or town) and county written after my name, my residence address is correctly stated, and I have knowingly signed this petition only once.

The following declaration must be printed on the reverse side of the petition:

I,, swear or affirm under penalty of law that I circulated this sheet of the foregoing petition, and that, to the best of my knowledge, every person who signed this sheet of the foregoing petition knowingly and without any compensation or promise of compensation willingly signed his or her true name and that the

information provided therewith is true and correct. I further acknowledge that under chapter 29A.84 RCW, forgery of signatures on this petition constitutes a class C felony, and that offering any consideration or gratuity to any person to induce them to sign a petition is a gross misdemeanor, such violations being punishable by fine or imprisonment or both.

RCW 9A.46.020 applies to any conduct constituting harassment against a petition signature gatherer. This penalty does not preclude the victim from seeking any other remedy otherwise available under law.

The petition must include a place for each petitioner to sign and print his or her name, and the address, city, and county at which he or she is registered to vote. [2013 c 11 s 74; 2005 c 239 s 3; 2003 c 111 s 1814; 1993 c 256 s 10; 1982 c 116 s 11; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.110. Prior: 1913 c 138 s 7, part; RRS s 5403, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.110.]

Effective date—2005 c 239: See note following RCW 29A.72.110.

Severability—Effective date—1993 c 256: See notes following RCW 29A.84.280.

RCW 29A.72.140 Warning statement—Further requirements. The word "warning" and the following warning statement regarding signing petitions must appear on petitions as prescribed by this title and must be printed on each petition sheet such that they occupy not less than four square inches of the front of the petition sheet.

WARNING

Every person who signs this petition with any other than his or her true name, knowingly signs more than one of these petitions, signs this petition when he or she is not a legal voter, or makes any false statement on this petition may be punished by fine or imprisonment or both.

[2003 c 111 s 1815; 1993 c 256 s 5. Formerly RCW 29.79.115.]

Severability—Effective date—1993 c 256: See notes following RCW 29A.84.280.

RCW 29A.72.150 Petitions—Signatures—Number necessary. When the person proposing any initiative measure has obtained signatures of legal voters equal to or exceeding eight percent of the votes cast for the office of governor at the last regular gubernatorial election prior to the submission of the signatures for verification, or when the person or organization demanding any referendum of an act or part of an act of the legislature has obtained a number of signatures of legal voters equal to or exceeding four percent of the votes cast for the office of governor at the last regular gubernatorial election prior to the submission of the signatures for verification, the petition containing the signatures may be submitted to the secretary of state for filing. [2003 c 111 s 1816; 1982 c 116 s 12; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.120. Prior: 1913 c 138 s 11, part; RRS s 5407, part. See also

State Constitution Art. 2 s 1A (Amendment 30), (L. 1955, p. 1860, S.J.R. No. 4). Formerly RCW 29.79.120.]

RCW 29A.72.160 Petitions—Time for filing. The time for submitting initiative or referendum petitions to the secretary of state for filing is as follows:

(1) A referendum petition ordering and directing that the whole or some part or parts of an act passed by the legislature be referred to the people for their approval or rejection at the next ensuing general election or a special election ordered by the legislature, must be submitted not more than ninety days after the final adjournment of the session of the legislature which passed the act;

(2) An initiative petition proposing a measure to be submitted to the people for their approval or rejection at the next ensuing general election, must be submitted not less than four months before the date of such election;

(3) An initiative petition proposing a measure to be submitted to the legislature at its next ensuing regular session must be submitted not less than ten days before the commencement of the session. [2003 c 111 s 1817. Prior: 1965 c 9 s 29.79.140; prior: 1913 c 138 s 12, part; RRS s 5408, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.140.]

Initiative, referendum, time for filing: State Constitution Art. 2 s 1 (a) and (d) (Amendment 7).

Measures, petitions, time for filing various types: RCW 29A.72.030.

RCW 29A.72.170 Petitions—Acceptance or rejection by secretary of state. The secretary of state may refuse to file any initiative or referendum petition being submitted upon any of the following grounds:

(1) That the petition does not contain the information required by RCW 29A.72.110, 29A.72.120, or 29A.72.130.

(2) That the petition clearly bears insufficient signatures.

(3) That the time within which the petition may be filed has expired.

In case of such refusal, the secretary of state shall endorse on the petition the word "submitted" and the date, and retain the petition pending appeal.

If none of the grounds for refusal exists, the secretary of state must accept and file the petition. [2003 c 111 s 1818; 1982 c 116 s 13; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.150. Prior: (i) 1913 c 138 s 11, part; RRS s 5407, part. (ii) 1913 c 138 s 12, part; RRS s 5408, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.150.]

RCW 29A.72.180 Petitions—Review of refusal to file. If the secretary of state refuses to file an initiative or referendum petition when submitted for filing, the persons submitting it for filing may, within ten days after the refusal, apply to the superior court of Thurston county for an order requiring the secretary of state to bring the petitions before the court, and for a writ of mandate to compel the secretary of state to file it. The application takes precedence over other cases and matters and must be speedily heard and determined.

If the court issues the citation, and determines that the petition is legal in form and apparently contains the requisite number of signatures and was submitted for filing within the time prescribed in the Constitution, it shall issue its mandate requiring the secretary of state to file it as of the date of submission for filing.

The decision of the superior court granting a writ of mandate is final. [2003 c 111 s 1819; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.160. Prior: 1913 c 138 s 13, part; RRS s 5409, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.160.]

Initiative, referendum, time for filing: State Constitution Art. 2 s 1 (a) and (d) (Amendment 7).

RCW 29A.72.190 Petitions—Appellate review. The decision of the superior court refusing to grant a writ of mandate may be reviewed by the supreme court within five days after the decision of the superior court. The review must be considered an emergency matter of public concern, and be heard and determined with all convenient speed. If the supreme court decides that the petitions are legal in form and apparently contain the requisite number of signatures of legal voters, and were filed within the time prescribed in the Constitution, it shall issue its mandate directing the secretary of state to file the petition as of the date of submission. [2003 c 111 s 1820; 1988 c 202 s 28; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.170. Prior: 1913 c 138 s 13, part; RRS s 5409, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.170.]

Rules of court: *Writ procedure superseded by RAP 2.1(b), 2.2, 18.22.*

Severability—1988 c 202: See note following RCW 2.24.050.

RCW 29A.72.200 Petitions—Destruction on final refusal. If no appeal is taken from the refusal of the secretary of state to file a petition within the time prescribed, or if an appeal is taken and the secretary of state is not required to file the petition by the mandate of either the superior or the supreme court, the secretary of state shall destroy it. [2003 c 111 s 1821. Prior: 1965 c 9 s 29.79.180; prior: 1913 c 138 s 13, part; RRS s 5409, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.180.]

RCW 29A.72.210 Petitions—Consolidation into volumes. If the secretary of state accepts and files an initiative or referendum petition upon its being submitted for filing or if he or she is required to file it by the court, he or she shall, in the presence of the person submitting such petition for filing if he or she desires to be present, arrange and assemble the sheets containing the signatures into such volumes as will be most convenient for verification and canvassing and shall consecutively number the volumes and stamp the date of filing on each volume. [2003 c 111 s 1822. Prior: 1982 c 116 s 14; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.190; prior: 1913 c 138 s 14; RRS s 5410. Formerly RCW 29.79.190.]

RCW 29A.72.230 Petitions—Verification and canvass of signatures, observers—Statistical sampling—Initiatives to

legislature, certification of. Upon the filing of an initiative or referendum petition, the secretary of state shall proceed to verify and canvass the names of the legal voters on the petition. The verification and canvass of signatures on the petition may be observed by persons representing the advocates and opponents of the proposed measure so long as they make no record of the names, addresses, or other information on the petitions or related records during the verification process except upon the order of the superior court of Thurston county. The secretary of state may limit the number of observers to not less than two on each side, if in his or her opinion, a greater number would cause undue delay or disruption of the verification process. Any such limitation shall apply equally to both sides. The secretary of state may use any statistical sampling techniques for this verification and canvass which have been adopted by rule as provided by chapter 34.05 RCW. No petition will be rejected on the basis of any statistical method employed, and no petition will be accepted on the basis of any statistical method employed if such method indicates that the petition contains fewer than the requisite number of signatures of legal voters. If the secretary of state finds the same name signed to more than one petition, he or she shall reject all but the first such valid signature. For an initiative to the legislature, the secretary of state shall transmit a certified copy of the proposed measure to the legislature at the opening of its session and, as soon as the signatures on the petition have been verified and canvassed, the secretary of state shall send to the legislature a certificate of the facts relating to the filing, verification, and canvass of the petition. [2003 c 111 s 1823. Prior: 1993 c 368 s 1; 1982 c 116 s 15; 1977 ex.s. c 361 s 105; 1969 ex.s. c 107 s 1; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.200; prior: 1933 c 144 s 1; 1913 c 138 s 15; RRS s 5411. Formerly RCW 29.79.200.]

Effective date—1993 c 368: "This act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect July 1, 1993." [1993 c 368 s 2.]

Effective date—Severability—1977 ex.s. c 361: See notes following RCW 29A.16.040.

RCW 29A.72.240 Count of signatures—Review. Any citizen dissatisfied with the determination of the secretary of state that an initiative or referendum petition contains or does not contain the requisite number of signatures of legal voters may, within five days after such determination, apply to the superior court of Thurston county for a citation requiring the secretary of state to submit the petition to said court for examination, and for a writ of mandate compelling the certification of the measure and petition, or for an injunction to prevent the certification thereof to the legislature, as the case may be. Such application and all proceedings had thereunder shall take precedence over other cases and shall be speedily heard and determined.

The decision of the superior court granting or refusing to grant the writ of mandate or injunction may be reviewed by the supreme court within five days after the decision of the superior court, and if the supreme court decides that a writ of mandate or injunction, as the

case may be, should issue, it shall issue the writ directed to the secretary of state; otherwise, it shall dismiss the proceedings. The clerk of the supreme court shall forthwith notify the secretary of state of the decision of the supreme court. [2003 c 111 s 1824. Prior: 1988 c 202 s 29; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.210; prior: 1913 c 138 s 17; RRS s 5413. Formerly RCW 29.79.210.]

Rules of court: *Writ procedure superseded by RAP 2.1(b), 2.2, 18.22.*

Severability—1988 c 202: See note following RCW 2.24.050.

RCW 29A.72.250 Initiatives and referenda to the people—Certificates of sufficiency. If a referendum or initiative petition for submission of a measure to the people is found sufficient, the secretary of state shall at the time and in the manner that he or she certifies to the county auditors of the various counties the names of candidates for state and district officers certify to each county auditor the serial numbers and ballot titles of the several initiative and referendum measures to be voted upon at the next ensuing general election or special election ordered by the legislature. [2023 c 109 s 5; 2013 c 11 s 75; 2008 c 1 s 10 (Initiative Measure No. 960, approved November 6, 2007); 2003 c 111 s 1825; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.230. Prior: 1913 c 138 s 19; RRS s 5415. Formerly RCW 29.79.230.]

Findings—2023 c 109: See note following RCW 29A.32.070.

Findings—Intent—Construction—Severability—Subheadings and part headings not law—Short title—Effective date—2008 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 960): See notes following RCW 43.135.031.

RCW 29A.72.260 Rejected initiatives to legislature. Whenever any measure proposed by initiative petition for submission to the legislature is rejected by the legislature or the legislature takes no action thereon before the end of the regular session at which it is submitted, the secretary of state shall certify the serial number and ballot title thereof to the county auditors for printing on the ballots at the next ensuing general election in like manner as initiative measures for submission to the people are certified. [2003 c 111 s 1826. Prior: 1965 c 9 s 29.79.270; prior: 1913 c 138 s 21; RRS s 5417. Formerly RCW 29.79.270.]

RCW 29A.72.270 Alternatives to initiatives to the legislature. If the legislature, having rejected a measure submitted to it by initiative petition, proposes a different measure dealing with the same subject, the secretary of state shall give that measure the same number as that borne by the initiative measure followed by the letter "B." Such measure so designated as "Alternative Measure No. . . . B," together with the ballot title thereof, when ascertained, shall be certified by the secretary of state to the county auditors for printing on the ballots for submission to the voters for their approval or rejection in like manner as initiative measures for submission to the people are certified. [2003 c 111 s 1827. Prior:

1965 c 9 s 29.79.280; prior: 1913 c 138 s 22, part; RRS s 5418, part.
Formerly RCW 29.79.280.]

RCW 29A.72.280 Concise description for alternative to initiative to the legislature. For a measure designated as "Alternative Measure No. . . . B," the secretary of state shall obtain from the measure adopting the alternative, or otherwise the attorney general, a concise description of the alternative measure that differs from the concise description of the original initiative and indicates as clearly as possible the essential differences between the two measures. [2003 c 111 s 1828. Prior: 2000 c 197 s 6; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.290; prior: 1913 c 138 s 22, part; RRS s 5418, part. Formerly RCW 29.79.290.]

Part headings not law—2000 c 197: See note following RCW 29A.72.050.

RCW 29A.72.290 Printing ballot titles on ballots—Separate headings. The county auditor of each county shall print the serial numbers, ballot titles, and public investment impact disclosures certified by the secretary of state on the official ballots for the election at which initiative and referendum measures are to be submitted to the people for their approval or rejection. They must appear under separate headings in the order of the serial numbers as follows:

- (1) Initiatives to the people;
- (2) Referendum measures;
- (3) Referendum bills;
- (4) Initiatives to the legislature;
- (5) Initiatives to the legislature and legislative alternatives;
- (6) Proposed constitutional amendments. [2023 c 109 s 6; 2022 c 114 s 4; 2013 c 11 s 76; 2008 c 1 s 11 (Initiative Measure No. 960, approved November 6, 2007); 2003 c 111 s 1829; 1965 c 9 s 29.79.300. Prior: 1913 c 138 s 23; RRS s 5419. Formerly RCW 29.79.300.]

Findings—2023 c 109: See note following RCW 29A.32.070.

Findings—2022 c 114: See note following RCW 29A.72.027.

Findings—Intent—Construction—Severability—Subheadings and part headings not law—Short title—Effective date—2008 c 1 (Initiative Measure No. 960): See notes following RCW 43.135.031.