

The Basic Steps To Do An Initiative In Oregon Statutes And Amendments – Direct Initiative Process

Basic Procedures: When the proponent files the initiative and application with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State immediately sends a copy to the Attorney General. The Attorney General has 5 days to write the ballot title and summary. The Attorney General then sends the title and summary to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State sends copies of the full text, title and summary to the Legislature, proponents and other interested parties (like journalists and activists who are on the Secretary of State's e-mail list.)

There is then a 15 day comment period during which the public can review and debate the ballot title, summary and full text. (There are no official public hearings.) It is during this 15-day comment period that proponent can challenge the wording of the title or summary in the Oregon Supreme Court. The Court, however, does not have a set time frame for dealing with any disputes. If the proponent agrees with the ballot title, then the proponent will put the petition in the correct format with the ballot title and begin collecting signatures after the 15 days.

It is normally the practice to file several measures with the Secretary of State with slightly different wording so you can get different ballot titles to chose from before circulating.

Date initiative language can be submitted to state for the November 2002 ballot: Any time after July 7, 2000 for the 2002 ballot.

Signatures are tied to vote of which office: Governor

Next Gubernatorial election: 2002

Votes cast for governor in last election: 1,113,098

Net number of signatures required: 8% of votes cast for Governor for a constitutional amendment (89,048) and 6% for a statute (66,786)

Distribution requirement: None

Circulation Period: About two years. (Maximum circulation period is from July 7, 2000 to July 5, 2002.)

Do circulators have to be residents: No.

Date when signatures are due for certification: July 5, 2002

Signature verification process: Petitions are turned into the Secretary of State's office. The Secretary of State highlights a random sample and sends them to the appropriate counties for verification.

Single-subject restriction: Oregon has a very strict single subject requirement.

Legislative tampering: Legislature can repeal and amend initiative statutes by simple majority.

General Comment: On November 5, 2002 the voters adopted a constitutional amendment – which will go into affect on December 5, 2002 – that states, “it shall be unlawful to pay or receive money or other thing of value based on the number of signatures obtained on an initiative or referendum petition. Nothing herein prohibits payment for signature gathering which is not based, either directly or indirectly, on the number of signatures obtained.”