

Massachusetts Constitution

Article XLVIII The Initiative.

II. Initiative Petitions.

Section 1. Contents. - An initiative petition shall set forth the full text of the constitutional amendment or law, hereinafter designated as the measure, which is proposed by the petition.

Section 2. Excluded Matters. - No measure that relates to religion, religious practices or religious institutions; or to the appointment, qualification, tenure, removal, recall or compensation of judges; or to the reversal of a judicial decision; or to the powers, creation or abolition of courts; or the operation of which is restricted to a particular town, city or other political division or to particular districts or localities of the commonwealth; or that makes a specific appropriation of money from the treasury of the commonwealth, shall be proposed by an initiative petition; but if a law approved by the people is not repealed, the general court shall raise by taxation or otherwise and shall appropriate such money as may be necessary to carry such law into effect.

Neither the eighteenth amendment of the constitution, as approved and ratified to take effect on the first day of October in the year nineteen hundred and eighteen, nor this provision for its protection, shall be the subject of an initiative amendment.

No proposition inconsistent with any one of the following rights of the individual, as at present declared in the declaration of rights, shall be the subject of an initiative or referendum petition: The right to receive compensation for private property appropriated to public use; the right of access to and protection in courts of justice; the right of trial by jury; protection from unreasonable search, unreasonable bail and the law martial; freedom of the press; freedom of speech; freedom of elections; and the right of peaceable assembly.

No part of the constitution specifically excluding any matter from the operation of the popular initiative and referendum shall be the subject of an initiative petition; nor shall this section be the subject of such a petition. The limitations on the legislative power of the general court in the constitution shall extend to the legislative power of the people as exercised hereunder.

[Section 3. Mode of Originating. - Such petition shall first be signed by ten qualified voters of the commonwealth and shall then be submitted to the attorney-general, and if he shall certify that the measure is in proper form for submission to the people, and that it is not, either affirmatively or negatively, substantially the same as any measure which has been qualified for submission or submitted to the people within three years of the succeeding first Wednesday in December and that it contains only subjects not excluded from the popular initiative and which are related or which are mutually dependent, it may then be filed with the secretary of the commonwealth. The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide

blanks for the use of subsequent signers, and shall print at the top of each blank a description of the proposed measure as such description will appear on the ballot together with the names and residences of the first ten signers. All initiative petitions, with the first ten signatures attached, shall be filed with the secretary of the commonwealth not earlier than the first Wednesday of the September before the assembling of the general court into which they are to be introduced, and the remainder of the required signatures shall be filed not later than the first Wednesday of the following December.] [Section 3 superseded by section 1 of Amendments, Art. LXXIV.]

Section 4. Transmission to the General Court. - If an initiative petition, signed by the required number of qualified voters, has been filed as aforesaid, the secretary of the commonwealth shall, upon the assembling of the general court, transmit it to the clerk of the house of representatives, and the proposed measure shall then be deemed to be introduced and pending.

III. Legislative Action. General Provisions.

Section 1. Reference to Committee. - If a measure is introduced into the general court by initiative petition, it shall be referred to a committee thereof, and the petitioners and all parties in interest shall be heard, and the measure shall be considered and reported upon to the general court with the committee's recommendations, and the reasons therefor, in writing. Majority and minority reports shall be signed by the members of said committee.

Section 2. Legislative Substitutes. - The general court may, by resolution passed by yea and nay vote, either by the two houses separately, or in the case of a constitutional amendment by a majority of those voting thereon in joint session in each of two years as hereinafter provided, submit to the people a substitute for any measure introduced by initiative petition, such substitute to be designated on the ballot as the legislative substitute for such an initiative measure and to be grouped with it as an alternative therefor.

IV. Legislative Action on Proposed Constitutional Amendments.

[Section 1. Definition. - A proposal for amendment to the constitution introduced into the general court by initiative petition shall be designated an initiative amendment, and an amendment introduced by a member of either house shall be designated a legislative substitute or a legislative amendment.

Section 2. Joint Session. - If a proposal for a specific amendment of the constitution is introduced into the general court by initiative petition signed by not less than twenty-five thousand qualified voters, or if in case of a proposal for amendment introduced into the general court by a member of either house, consideration thereof in joint session is called for by vote of either house, such proposal shall, not later than the second Wednesday in June, be laid before a joint session of the two houses, at which the president of the senate shall preside; and if the two houses fail

to agree upon a time for holding any joint session hereby required, or fail to continue the same from time to time until final action has been taken upon all amendments pending, the governor shall call such joint session or continuance thereof.] [Section 2 superseded by section 1 of Amendments, Art. LXXXI.]

Section 3. Amendment of Proposed Amendments. - A proposal for an amendment to the constitution introduced by initiative petition shall be voted upon in the form in which it was introduced, unless such amendment is amended by vote of three-fourths of the members voting thereon in joint session, which vote shall be taken by call of the yeas and nays if called for by any member.

Section 4. Legislative Action. - Final legislative action in the joint session upon any amendment shall be taken only by call of the yeas and nays, which shall be entered upon the journals of the two houses; and an unfavorable vote at any stage preceding final action shall be verified by call of the yeas and nays, to be entered in like manner. At such joint session a legislative amendment receiving the affirmative votes of a majority of all the members elected, or an initiative amendment receiving the affirmative votes of not less than one-fourth of all the members elected, shall be referred to the next general court.

Section 5. Submission to the People. - If in the next general court a legislative amendment shall again be agreed to in joint session by a majority of all the members elected, or if an initiative amendment or a legislative substitute shall again receive the affirmative votes of a least one-fourth of all the members elected, such fact shall be certified by the clerk of such joint session to the secretary of the commonwealth, who shall submit the amendment to the people at the next state election. Such amendment shall become part of the constitution if approved, in the case of a legislative amendment, by a majority of the voters voting thereon, or if approved, in the case of an initiative amendment or a legislative substitute, by voters equal in number to at least thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election and also by a majority of the voters voting on such amendment.

Legislative Action on Proposed Laws.

[Section 1. Legislative Procedure. - If an initiative petition for a law is introduced into the general court, signed by not less than twenty thousand qualified voters, a vote shall be taken by yeas and nays in both houses before the first Wednesday of June upon the enactment of such law in the form in which it stands in such petition. If the general court fails to enact such law before the first Wednesday of June, and if such petition is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth, not earlier than the first Wednesday of the following July nor later than the first Wednesday of the following August, not less than five thousand signatures of qualified voters, in addition to those signing such initiative petition, which signatures must have been obtained after the first Wednesday of June aforesaid, then the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit

such proposed law to the people at the next state election. If it shall be approved by voters equal in number to at least thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election and also by a majority of the voters voting on such law, it shall become law, and shall take effect in thirty days after such state election or at such time after such election as may be provided in such law.] [Section 1 superseded by section 2 of Amendments, Art. LXXXI.]

[Section 2. Amendment by Petitioners. - If the general court fails to pass a proposed law before the first Wednesday of June, a majority of the first ten signers of the initiative petition therefor shall have the right, subject to certification by the attorney-general filed as hereinafter provided, to amend the measure which is the subject of such petition. An amendment so made shall not invalidate any signature attached to the petition. If the measure so amended, signed by a majority of the first ten signers, is filed with the secretary of the commonwealth before the first Wednesday of the following July, together with a certificate signed by the attorney-general to the effect that the amendment made by such proposers is in his opinion perfecting in its nature and does not materially change the substance of the measure, and if such petition is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth, not earlier than the first Wednesday of the following July nor later than the first Wednesday of the following August, not less than five thousand signatures of qualified voters, in addition to those signing such initiative petition, which signatures must have been obtained after the first Wednesday of June aforesaid, then the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit the measure to the people in its amended form.] [Section 2 superseded by section 3 of Amendments, Art. LXXXI.]

VI. Conflicting and Alternative Measures.

If in any judicial proceeding, provisions of constitutional amendments or of laws approved by the people at the same election are held to be in conflict, then the provisions contained in the measure that received the largest number of affirmative votes at such election shall govern.

A constitutional amendment approved at any election shall govern any law approved at the same election.

The general court, by resolution passed as hereinbefore set forth, may provide for grouping and designating upon the ballot as conflicting measures or as alternative measures, only one of which is to be adopted, any two or more proposed constitutional amendments or laws which have been or may be passed or qualified for submission to the people at any one election: provided, that a proposed constitutional amendment and a proposed law shall not be so grouped, and that the ballot shall afford an opportunity to the voter to vote for each of the measures or for only one of the measures, as may be provided in said resolution, or against each of the measures so grouped as conflicting or as alternative. In case more than one of the measures so grouped shall receive the vote

required for its approval as herein provided, only that one for which the largest affirmative vote was cast shall be deemed to be approved.

The Referendum.

I. When Statutes shall take Effect.

No law passed by the general court shall take effect earlier than ninety days after it has become a law, excepting laws declared to be emergency laws and laws which may not be made the subject of a referendum petition, as herein provided.

II. Emergency Measures.

A law declared to be an emergency law shall contain a preamble setting forth the facts constituting the emergency, and shall contain the statement that such law is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety or convenience. [A separate vote shall be taken on the preamble by call of the yeas and nays, which shall be recorded, and unless the preamble is adopted by two-thirds of the members of each house voting thereon, the law shall not be an emergency law; but] if the governor, at any time before the election at which it is to be submitted to the people on referendum, files with the secretary of the commonwealth a statement declaring that in his opinion the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, safety or convenience requires that such law should take effect forthwith and that it is an emergency law and setting forth the facts constituting the emergency, then such law, if not previously suspended as hereinafter provided, shall take effect without suspension, or if such law has been so suspended such suspension shall thereupon terminate and such law shall thereupon take effect: but no grant of any franchise or amendment thereof, or renewal or extension thereof for more than one year shall be declared to be an emergency law. [See Amendments, Art. LXVII.]

III. Referendum Petitions.

Section 1. Contents. - A referendum petition may ask for a referendum to the people upon any law enacted by the general court which is not herein expressly excluded.

Section 2. Excluded Matters. - No law that relates to religion, religious practices or religious institutions; or to the appointment, qualification, tenure, removal or compensation of judges; or to the powers, creation or abolition of courts; or the operation of which is restricted to a particular town, city or other political division or to particular districts or localities of the commonwealth; or that appropriates money for the current or ordinary expenses of the commonwealth or for any of its departments, boards, commissions or institutions shall be the subject of a referendum petition.

Section 3. Mode of Petitioning for the Suspension of a Law and a Referendum Thereon. - A petition asking for a referendum on a law, and requesting that the operation of such law be suspended, shall first be signed by ten qualified voters and shall then be filed with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than thirty days after the law that is the

subject of the petition has become law. [The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide blanks for the use of subsequent signers, and shall print at the top of each blank a description of the proposed law as such description will appear on the ballot together with the names and residences of the first ten signers. If such petition is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than ninety days after the law which is the subject of the petition has become law the signatures of not less than fifteen thousand qualified voters of the commonwealth, then the operation of such law shall be suspended, and the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit such law to the people at the next state election, if thirty days intervene between the date when such petition is filed with the secretary of the commonwealth and the date for holding such state election; if thirty days do not so intervene, then such law shall be submitted to the people at the next following state election, unless in the meantime it shall have been repealed; and if it shall be approved by a majority of the qualified voters voting thereon, such law shall, subject to the provisions of the constitution, take effect in thirty days after such election, or at such time after such election as may be provided in such law; if not so approved such law shall be null and void; but no such law shall be held to be disapproved if the negative vote is less than thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election.] [Section 3 amended by section 2 of Amendments, Art. LXXIV and section 4 of Amendments, Art. LXXXI]

Section 4. Petitions for Referendum on an Emergency Law or a Law the Suspension of Which is Not Asked for. - A referendum petition may ask for the repeal of an emergency law or of a law which takes effect because the referendum petition does not contain a request for suspension, as aforesaid. Such petition shall first be signed by ten qualified voters of the commonwealth, and shall then be filed with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than thirty days after the law which is the subject of the petition has become law. [The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide blanks for the use of subsequent signers, and shall print at the top of each blank a description of the proposed law as such description will appear on the ballot together with the names and residences of the first ten signers. If such petition filed as aforesaid is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than ninety days after the law which is the subject of the petition has become law the signatures of not less than ten thousand qualified voters of the commonwealth protesting against such law and asking for a referendum thereon, then the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit such law to the people at the next state election, if thirty days intervene between the date when such petition is filed with the secretary of the commonwealth and the date for holding such state election. If thirty days do not so intervene, then it shall be submitted to the people at the next following state election, unless in the meantime it shall have been repealed; and if it shall not be approved by a majority of the qualified voters voting thereon, it shall, at

the expiration of thirty days after such election, be thereby repealed; but no such law shall be held to be disapproved if the negative vote is less than thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election.] [Section 4 superseded by section 3 of Amendments, Art. LXXIV and section 5 of Amendments, Art. LXXXI.]

General Provisions.

I. Identification and Certification of Signatures.

Provision shall be made by law for the proper identification and certification of signatures to the petitions hereinbefore referred to, and for penalties for signing any such petition, or refusing to sign it, for money or other valuable consideration, and for the forgery of signatures thereto. Pending the passage of such legislation all provisions of law relating to the identification and certification of signatures to petitions for the nomination of candidates for state offices or to penalties for the forgery of such signatures shall apply to the signatures to the petitions herein referred to. The general court may provide by law that no co-partnership or corporation shall undertake for hire or reward to circulate petitions, may require individuals who circulate petitions for hire or reward to be licensed, and may make other reasonable regulations to prevent abuses arising from the circulation of petitions for hire or reward.

II. Limitation on Signatures.

Not more than one-fourth of the certified signatures on any petition shall be those of registered voters of any one county.

III. Form of Ballot.

Each proposed amendment to the constitution, and each law submitted to the people, shall be described on the ballots by a description to be determined by the attorney-general, subject to such provision as may be made by law, and the secretary of the commonwealth shall give each question a number and cause such question, except as otherwise authorized herein, to be printed on the ballot in the following form: -

In the case of an amendment to the constitution: Shall an amendment to the constitution (here insert description, and state, in distinctive type, whether approved or disapproved by the general court, and by what vote thereon) be approved?

In the case of a law: Shall a law (here insert description, and state, in distinctive type, whether approved or disapproved by the general court, and by what vote thereon) be approved?

IV. Information for Voters.

The secretary of the commonwealth shall cause to be printed and sent to each registered voter in the commonwealth the full text of every measure to be submitted to the people, together with a copy of the legislative committee's majority and minority reports, if there be such, with the names of the majority and minority members thereon, a statement of the votes of the general court on the measure, and a description of the measure as such description will appear on the ballot; and shall, in such manner as may be provided by law, cause to be prepared and sent to the voters

other information and arguments for and against the measure.] [Subheadings III and IV> superseded by section 4 of Amendments, Art. LXXIV.] [Subheading IV superseded by Amendments, Art. CVIII.]

V. The Veto Power of the Governor.

The veto power of the governor shall not extend to measures approved by the people.

VI. The General Court's Power of Repeal.

Subject to the veto power of the governor and to the right of referendum by petition as herein provided, the general court may amend or repeal a law approved by the people.

VII. Amendment Declared to be Self-executing.

This article of amendment to the constitution is self-executing, but legislation not inconsistent with anything herein contained may be enacted to facilitate the operation of its provisions.

Article LXVII. Article XLVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution is hereby amended by striking out, in that part entitled "II. Emergency Measures", under the heading "The Referendum", the words "A separate vote shall be taken on the preamble by call of the yeas and nays, which shall be recorded, and unless the preamble is adopted by two-thirds of the members of each House voting thereon, the law shall not be an emergency law; but" and substituting the following: -- A separate vote, which shall be recorded, shall be taken on the preamble, and unless the preamble is adopted by two-thirds of the members of each House voting thereon, the law shall not be an emergency law. Upon the request of two members of the Senate or of five members of the House of Representatives, the vote on the preamble in such branch shall be taken by call of the yeas and nays.

Article LXXIV. Section 1. Article XLVIII of the amendments to the constitution is hereby amended by striking out section three, under the heading "THE INITIATIVE. III. Initiative Petitions.", and inserting in place thereof the following: -

Section 3. Mode of Originating. - Such petition shall first be signed by ten qualified voters of the commonwealth and shall be submitted to the attorney-general not later than the first Wednesday of the August before the assembling of the general court into which it is to be introduced, and if he shall certify that the measure and the title thereof are in proper form for submission to the people, and that the measure is not, either affirmatively or negatively, substantially the same as any measure which has been qualified for submission or submitted to the people at either of the two preceding biennial state elections, and that it contains only subjects not excluded from the popular initiative and which are related or which are mutually dependent, it may then be filed with the secretary of the commonwealth. The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide blanks for the use of subsequent signers, and shall print at the top of each

blank a fair, concise summary, as determined by the attorney-general, of the proposed measure as such summary will appear on the ballot together with the names and residences of the first ten signers. All initiative petitions, with the first ten signatures attached, shall be filed with the secretary of the commonwealth not earlier than the first Wednesday of the September before the assembling of the general court into which they are to be introduced, and the remainder of the required signatures shall be filed not later than the first Wednesday of the following December.

Section 2. Section three of that part of said Article XLVIII, under the heading "THE REFERENDUM. III. Referendum Petitions.", is hereby amended by striking out the words "The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide blanks for the use of subsequent signers, and shall print at the top of each blank a description of the proposed law as such description will appear on the ballot together with the names and residences of the first ten signers.", and inserting in place thereof the words "The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide blanks for the use of subsequent signers, and shall print at the top of each blank a fair, concise summary of the proposed law as such summary will appear on the ballot together with the names and residences of the first ten signers."

Section 3. Section four of that part of said Article XLVIII under the heading "THE REFERENDUM. III. Referendum Petitions.", is hereby amended by striking out the words "The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide blanks for the use of subsequent signers, and shall print at the top of each blank a description of the proposed law as such description will appear on the ballot together with the names and residences of the first ten signers.", and inserting in place thereof the words "The secretary of the commonwealth shall provide blanks for the use of subsequent signers, and shall print at the top of each blank a fair, concise summary of the proposed law as such summary will appear on the ballot together with the names and residences of the first ten signers."

Section 4. Said Article XLVIII is hereby further amended by striking out, under the heading "GENERAL PROVISIONS", all of subheading "III. Form of Ballot." and all of subheading "IV. Information for Voters.", and inserting in place thereof the following: --

III. Form of Ballot.

A fair, concise summary, as determined by the attorney general, subject to such provision as may be made by law, of each proposed amendment to the constitution, and each law submitted to the people, shall be printed on the ballot, and the secretary of the commonwealth shall give each question a number and cause such question, except as otherwise authorized herein, to be printed on the ballot in the following form: --

In the case of an amendment to the constitution: Do you approve of the adoption of an amendment to the constitution summarized below, (here state, in distinctive type, whether approved or disapproved by the general court, and by what vote thereon)?

[Set forth summary here]

In the case of a law: Do you approve of a law summarized below, (here state, in distinctive type, whether approved or disapproved by the general court, and by what vote thereon)?

[Set forth summary here]

IV. Information for Voters.

The secretary of the commonwealth shall cause to be printed and sent to each registered voter in the commonwealth the full text of every measure to be submitted to the people, together with a copy of the legislative committee's majority and minority reports, if there be such, with the names of the majority and minority members thereon, a statement of the votes of the general court on the measure, and a fair, concise summary of the measure as such summary will appear on the ballot; and shall, in such manner as may be provided by law, cause to be prepared and sent to the voters other information and arguments for and against the measure.]

[See Amendments, Art. CVIII.]

Article LXXXI. Section 1. Article XLVIII of the Amendments to the Constitution is hereby amended by striking out section 2, under the heading "THE INITIATIVE. IV. Legislative Action on Proposed Constitutional Amendments.", and inserting in place thereof the following: -

Section 2. Joint Session. - If a proposal for a specific amendment of the constitution is introduced into the general court by initiative petition signed in the aggregate by not less than such number of voters as will equal three per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election, or if in case of a proposal for amendment introduced into the general court by a member of either house, consideration thereof in joint session is called for by vote of either house, such proposal shall, not later than the second Wednesday in May, be laid before a joint session of the two houses, at which the president of the senate shall preside; and if the two houses fail to agree upon a time for holding any joint session hereby required, or fail to continue the same from time to time until final action has been taken upon all amendments pending, the governor shall call such joint session or continuance thereof.

Section 2. Section 1 of that part of said Article XLVIII, under the heading "THE INITIATIVE. V. Legislative Action on Proposed Laws.", is hereby amended by striking out said section and inserting in place thereof the following: -

Section 1. Legislative Procedure. - If an initiative petition for a law is introduced into the general court, signed in the aggregate by not less than such number of voters as will equal three per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election, a vote shall be taken by yeas and nays in both houses before the first Wednesday of May upon the enactment of such law in the form in which it stands in such petition. If the general court fails to enact such law before the first Wednesday of May, and if such petition is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth, not earlier than the first Wednesday of

the following June nor later than the first Wednesday of the following July, a number of signatures of qualified voters equal in number to not less than one half of one per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election, in addition to those signing such initiative petition, which signatures must have been obtained after the first Wednesday of May aforesaid, then the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit such proposed law to the people at the next state election. If it shall be approved by voters equal in number to at least thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election and also by a majority of the voters voting on such law, it shall become law, and shall take effect in thirty days after such state election or at such time after such election as may be provided in such law.

Section 3. Section 2 of that part of said Article XLVIII, under the heading "THE INITIATIVE. V. Legislative Action on Proposed Laws.", is hereby amended by striking out said section and inserting in place thereof the following: -

Section 2. Amendment by Petitioners. - If the general court fails to pass a proposed law before the first Wednesday of May, a majority of the first ten signers of the initiative petition therefor shall have the right, subject to certification by the attorney-general filed as hereinafter provided, to amend the measure which is the subject of such petition. An amendment so made shall not invalidate any signature attached to the petition. If the measure so amended, signed by a majority of the first ten signers, is filed with the secretary of the commonwealth before the first Wednesday of the following June, together with a certificate signed by the attorney-general to the effect that the amendment made by such proposers is in his opinion perfecting in its nature and does not materially change the substance of the measure, and if such petition is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth, not earlier than the first Wednesday of the following June nor later than the first Wednesday of the following July, a number of signatures of qualified voters equal in number to not less than one half of one per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election in addition to those signing such initiative petition, which signatures must have been obtained after the first Wednesday of May aforesaid, then the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit the measure to the people in its amended form.

Section 4. Section 3 of that part of said Article XLVIII, under the heading "THE REFERENDUM. III. Referendum Petitions.", is hereby amended by striking out the sentence "If such petition is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than ninety days after the law which is the subject of the petition has become law the signatures of not less than fifteen thousand qualified voters of the commonwealth, then the operation of such law shall be suspended, and the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit such law to the people at the next state election, if thirty days intervene between the date when such petition is filed with the secretary of the commonwealth and the date for holding

such state election; if thirty days do not so intervene, then such law shall be submitted to the people at the next following state election, unless in the meantime it shall have been repealed; and if it shall be approved by a majority of the qualified voters voting thereon, such law shall, subject to the provisions of the constitution, take effect in thirty days after such election, or at such time after such election as may be provided in such law; if not so approved such law shall be null and void; but no such law shall be held to be disapproved if the negative vote is less than thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election." and inserting in place thereof the following sentence:-- If such petition is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than ninety days after the law which is the subject of the petition has become law a number of signatures of qualified voters equal in number to not less than two per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election, then the operation of such law shall be suspended, and the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit such law to the people at the next state election, if sixty days intervene between the date when such petition is filed with the secretary of the commonwealth and the date for holding such state election; if sixty days do not so intervene, then such law shall be submitted to the people at the next following state election, unless in the meantime it shall have been repealed; and if it shall be approved by a majority of the qualified voters voting thereon, such law shall, subject to the provisions of the constitution, take effect in thirty days after such election, or at such time after such election as may be provided in such law; if not so approved such law shall be null and void; but no such law shall be held to be disapproved if the negative vote is less than thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election.

Section 5. Section 4 of that part of said Article XLVIII, under the heading "THE REFERENDUM. III. Referendum Petitions.", is hereby amended by striking out the words "If such petition filed as aforesaid is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than ninety days after the law which is the subject of the petition has become law the signatures of not less than ten thousand qualified voters of the commonwealth protesting against such law and asking for a referendum thereon, then the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit such law to the people at the next state election, if thirty days intervene between the date when such petition is filed with the secretary of the commonwealth and the date for holding such state election. If thirty days do not so intervene, then it shall be submitted to the people at the next following state election, unless in the meantime it shall have been repealed; and if it shall not be approved by a majority of the qualified voters voting thereon, it shall, at the expiration of thirty days after such election, be thereby repealed; but no such law shall be held to be disapproved if the negative vote is less than thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election." and inserting in place thereof the following: - If

such petition filed as aforesaid is completed by filing with the secretary of the commonwealth not later than ninety days after the law which is the subject of the petition has become law a number of signatures of qualified voters equal in number to not less than one and one half per cent of the entire vote cast for governor at the preceding biennial state election protesting against such law and asking for a referendum thereon, then the secretary of the commonwealth shall submit such law to the people at the next state election, if sixty days intervene between the date when such petition is filed with the secretary of the commonwealth and the date for holding such state election. If sixty days do not so intervene, then it shall be submitted to the people at the next following state election, unless in the meantime it shall have been repealed; and if it shall not be approved by a majority of the qualified voters voting thereon, it shall, at the expiration of thirty days after such election, be thereby repealed; but no such law shall be held to be disapproved if the negative vote is less than thirty per cent of the total number of ballots cast at such state election.

Massachusetts Statutes

Part I. Administration of The Government.

Title VIII. Elections.

Chapter 53: Section 19. Questions of public policy submitted in certain districts upon application.

On an application signed by twelve hundred voters in any senatorial district, or by two hundred voters in any representative district, asking for the submission to the voters in that senatorial or representative district of any question of instructions to the senator or representatives from that district, and stating the substance thereof, the attorney general shall upon request of the state secretary determine whether or not such question is one of public policy, and if such question is determined to be one of public policy, the state secretary and the attorney general shall draft it in such simple, unequivocal and adequate form as shall be deemed best suited for presentation upon the ballot. Upon the fulfillment of the requirements of this and the two following sections the state secretary shall place such question on the official ballot to be used in that senatorial or representative district at the next state election.

Chapter 53: Section 20. Applications; signatures; identification; certification.

The provisions of law relative to the signing of nomination papers of candidates for state office, and to the identification and certification of names thereon and submission to the registrars therefor, shall apply, so far as apt, to applications submitted under section nineteen. Petition forms for such applications submitted under section nineteen shall be made available for use on or before the fifteenth Tuesday preceding the final date for filing as provided in section twenty-one.

Chapter 53: Section 21. Applications; filing; number of questions; resubmission.

Applications shall be filed with the state secretary not later than the first Wednesday of August before the election at which the questions are to be submitted. Not more than three questions under section nineteen shall be placed upon the ballot at one election, and they shall be submitted in the order in which the applications are filed. No question negatived and no question substantially the same shall be submitted again in less than three years.

Chapter 53: Section 22A. Signing initiative and referendum petitions; forms; receipt; filing date.

The provisions of law relative to the signing of nomination papers of candidates for state office, and to the identification and certification of names thereon and submission to the registrars therefor, shall apply, so far as apt, to the signing of initiative and referendum petitions and to the identification and certification of names thereon, and, except as otherwise provided, to the time of their submission to the registrars. Initiative or referendum petition forms shall be made available no later than the fourteenth day after the date such petitions are filed with the state secretary by the first ten signers; provided, however, that in the instance of petitions filed under the provisions of section three or section four of that part of Article XLVIII of the Amendments of the Constitution under the heading "'THE REFERENDUM. III. Referendum Petitions.'", the petition forms shall be made available no later than the fourteenth day after a summary has been prepared. Registrars shall receipt in writing for each initiative or referendum petition submitted to and received by them, and shall deliver such petitions only on receiving written receipts therefor or other identification acceptable to the registrars. Each initiative and referendum petition shall state the last day and hour for filing such petitions with the registrars and with the state secretary. Certificates showing that each of the ten original signers is a registered voter at the stated address, signed by a majority of the registrars of voters, shall accompany an original initiative or referendum petition. In no case shall any blank forms for such initiative or referendum petitions be larger than eight and one half inches by fourteen inches, nor shall anyone be prohibited from making exact copies of such blanks provided by the secretary of state for the purpose of collecting signatures for such petitions, nor shall any such copies be rejected for certification or submittal to the secretary of state.