

## §901. Petitions

To initiate proceedings for a people's veto referendum or the direct initiative of legislation, provided in the Constitution of Maine, Article IV, Part Third, Sections 17 and 18, a voter shall submit a written application to the Department of the Secretary of State on a form designed by the Secretary of State. The application must contain the names, residence addresses, e-mail addresses, telephone numbers and signatures of 5 voters, in addition to the applicant, who are designated to receive any notices in proceedings under this chapter. The Secretary of State shall provide such notices by e-mail only. For a direct initiative, the application must contain the full text of the proposed law and a summary that explains the purpose and intent of the direct initiative in both electronic and printed formats. The voter submitting the application shall sign the application in the presence of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State's designee or a notary public. [PL 2019, c. 636, §19 (AMD).]

On receipt, the Secretary of State or the Secretary of State's designee shall review the application and determine the form of the petition to be submitted to the voters. The date the approved form of the petition is provided to the voter submitting the application is the date of issuance for the purposes of this chapter. [PL 1993, c. 695, §34 (AMD).]

**1. Limitation on petitions.** An application for a people's veto referendum petition must be filed in the Department of the Secretary of State within 10 business days after adjournment of the legislative session at which the Act in question was passed. A direct initiative of legislation must meet the filing deadlines specified in the Constitution of Maine, Article IV, Part Third, Section 18. [PL 1997, c. 581, §2 (AMD).]

**2. Furnished within 10 days.**  
[PL 1993, c. 352, §1 (RP).]

**3. Forms printed by voters.**  
[PL 1993, c. 352, §1 (RP).]

**3-A. Review for proper form.** The Secretary of State shall review the proposed law for a direct initiative of legislation within 15 business days after receipt of the application and either reject the application or provide a first revised draft of the initiative legislation to the applicant within that time. The Secretary of State may reject the application if the Secretary of State determines that the proposed law:

- A. Does not conform to the form prescribed by the Secretary of State; or [PL 1993, c. 352, §1 (NEW).]
- B. Does not conform to the essential aspects of the drafting conventions established for the Maine Revised Statutes. The drafting conventions include but are not limited to:
  - (1) Correct allocation to the statutes and correct integration with existing statutes;
  - (2) Bill titles and statute section headnotes that objectively reflect the content of the bill, section or sections to which they apply;
  - (3) Conformity to the statutory numbering system; and
  - (4) Ensuring that bills enacting statutes do not contain provisions that describe intent or make testimonial statements without creating a legal requirement or duty. [PL 1993, c. 352, §1 (NEW).]

By consent of the applicant the proposed law may be modified to conform with the requirements of this section. The Secretary of State may request assistance from the Revisor of Statutes in reviewing the proposed law.

The applicant shall submit each subsequent draft of the legislation to the Secretary of State for review following the same process. The Secretary of State shall review each subsequent draft from the

applicant and provide a revised draft or written response suggesting how the proposed law may be modified to conform to the requirements of this section within 10 business days. The applicant must give written consent to the final language of the proposed law to the Secretary of State before the petition form is designed by the Secretary of State.

[PL 2009, c. 253, §58 (AMD).]

**3-B. Approved petitions printed by voters.** A voter must print the petitions in the form approved by the Secretary of State.

[PL 1993, c. 352, §1 (NEW).]

**4. Ballot question.** The ballot question for an initiative or a people's veto referendum must be drafted by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 906 and rules adopted in accordance with the Maine Administrative Procedure Act. The Secretary of State shall provide the ballot question to the applicant for a people's veto referendum within 10 business days after receipt of a properly completed application. If an initiative is filed with the Secretary of State and certified pursuant to the Constitution of Maine, Article IV, Part Third, Section 18 as having a sufficient number of signatures, the Secretary of State shall propose a ballot question to be submitted for public comment as provided in section 905-A.

[PL 2021, c. 570, §5 (AMD).]

**5. Summary of proposal.** For a direct initiative, the Secretary of State shall request the Revisor of Statutes to recommend a concise summary that objectively describes the content of the proposed law. The Secretary of State shall approve or amend the summary, and the summary and the fiscal impact statement required by Title 1, section 353 must be printed on the petition form immediately following the statements required by section 901-A.

[PL 2009, c. 341, §4 (AMD).]

**6. Rejection.** If the Secretary of State rejects an application under this section, the Secretary of State shall provide a written statement of the reasons for the decision.

[PL 1993, c. 352, §1 (NEW).]

**7. Court review.** A voter named in the application under this section may appeal any decision made by the Secretary of State under this section using the procedures for court review provided for in section 905, subsections 2 and 3.

[PL 1993, c. 352, §1 (NEW).]

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 1985, c. 161, §6 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 862, §8 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 352, §1 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 695, §§33,34 (AMD). PL 1997, c. 581, §§2-4 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 234, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 253, §§57, 58 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 341, §4 (AMD). PL 2019, c. 636, §19 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 570, §5 (AMD).

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