

# ROAD TO REFERENDUM

## *Citizen-initiated legislation in Maine*

### **1 Apply for a petition**

To start the process of changing state law, a voter must submit a written application to the Maine Secretary of State which includes the name, addresses, and signatures of 5 additional voters, the text of the proposed legislation, and a summary of its purpose. See [Maine Const. Art. IV, Pt. 3, §18\(1\), §20, and 21-A MRS §901](#).

### **2 Collect voter signatures**

If approved by the Secretary of State, the petition is circulated to collect signatures. There are many requirements, including a minimum amount of signatures. See [Maine Const. Art. IV, Pt. 3, §18\(2\), §20, and 21-A MRS §§901-A to 904-B](#).

### **3 Validity of the petition.**

Within 30 days of receiving a petition, the Secretary of State will issue a decision on the petition's validity. Appeals of this decision must be filed in Maine Superior Court. See [Maine Const. Art. IV, Pt. 3, §18\(2\), §20, and 21-A MRS §905](#).

### **4 Presented to Legislature.**

Initiated bills are assigned a bill number and go through the legislative process. The Legislature may enact the bill, take no action on the bill, or it may propose a competing measure to be placed on the ballot. See [Maine Const. Art. IV, Pt. 3, §18\(2\) and §20](#).

### **5 Referendum.**

If the Legislature does not enact the citizen-initiated bill, it is sent to referendum. The Secretary of State writes ballot questions in accordance with 21-A MRS §906. See also [Maine Const. Art. IV, Pt. 3, §18\(2\), \(3\), and §20](#).

### **6 Enactment.**

If the measure is approved by a majority of the votes, the law takes effect 30 days after the Governor proclaims the result *unless* the law requires certain expenditures. See [Maine Const. Art. IV, Pt. 3, §19 and §20](#).

## GO TO THE SOURCE



### Maine State Constitution

[Article IV, Part 3, §§18, 19, and 20](#)



### Maine Statutes

[Title 21-A, Chapter 11](#)



### Maine Secretary of State

[Citizen Initiative Application Packet](#)

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