

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

## **Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Require That Signatures on a Direct Initiative of Legislation Come from Each Congressional District**

**Constitutional amendment. Resolved:** Two thirds of each branch of the Legislature concurring, that the following amendment to the Constitution of Maine be proposed:

**Constitution, Art. IV, Pt. Third, §18, sub-§2** is amended to read:

**. 2. Referral to electors unless enacted by the Legislature without change; number of signatures necessary on direct initiative petitions; dating signatures on petitions; competing measures.** For any measure thus proposed by electors, the number of signatures of voters from each congressional district shall not be less than 10% of the total vote for Governor cast in that congressional district in the last gubernatorial election preceding the filing of such petition. The date each signature was made shall be written next to the signature on the petition. A signature is not valid if it is dated more than one year prior to the date that the petition was filed in the office of the Secretary of State. The measure thus proposed, unless enacted without change by the Legislature at the session at which it is presented, shall be submitted to the electors together with any amended form, substitute, or recommendation of the Legislature, and in such manner that the people can choose between the competing measures or reject both. When there are competing bills and neither receives a majority of the votes given for or against both, the one receiving the most votes shall at the next statewide election to be held not less than 60 days after the first vote thereon be submitted by itself if it receives more than 1/3 of the votes given for and against both. If the measure initiated is enacted by the Legislature without change, it shall not go to a referendum vote unless in pursuance of a demand made in accordance with the preceding section. The Legislature may order a special election on any measure that is subject to a vote of the people.

**Constitutional referendum procedure; form of question; effective date. Resolved:** That the municipal officers of this State shall notify the inhabitants of their respective cities, towns and plantations to meet, in the manner prescribed by law for holding a statewide election, at a statewide election held in the month of November following the passage of this resolution, to vote upon the ratification of the amendment proposed in this resolution by voting upon the following question:

"Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to require signatures on direct initiative petitions from voters from each congressional district of this State?"

The legal voters of each city, town and plantation shall vote by ballot on this question and designate their choice by a cross or check mark placed within the corresponding square below the word "Yes" or "No." The ballots must be received, sorted, counted and declared in open ward, town and plantation meetings and returns made to the Secretary of State in the same manner as votes for members of the Legislature. The Governor shall review the returns. If it appears that a majority of the legal votes are

cast in favor of the amendment, the Governor shall proclaim that fact without delay and the amendment becomes part of the Constitution of Maine on March 1, 2020.

**Secretary of State shall prepare ballots. Resolved:** That the Secretary of State shall prepare and furnish to each city, town and plantation all ballots, returns and copies of this resolution necessary to carry out the purposes of this referendum.

## SUMMARY

This resolution proposes to amend the Constitution of Maine to require that the signatures on a petition to directly initiate legislation be of voters from each of the State's 2 congressional districts and that the number of signatures from each congressional district be not less than 10% of the total vote for Governor cast in that congressional district in the previous gubernatorial election. This resolution provides that, if the required votes are cast in favor of the proposed amendment to the Constitution, the proposed amendment becomes part of the Constitution on March 1, 2020 instead of on the date of the Governor's proclamation.