

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 the 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

Ask a Law Librarian

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The Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library

cannot offer legal advice or interpret the law.