

## HCS HJR 97 -- INITIATIVE PETITIONS

SPONSOR: Eggleston

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Elections and Elected Officials by a vote of 4 to 2. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 7 to 3.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HJR 97.

Upon voter approval, this proposed Constitutional amendment would require the sponsor(s) of initiative petitions proposing Constitutional amendments to collect signatures in every Congressional district and to submit any approved petition to the General Assembly for consideration in a manner similar to a bill. The signature of the Governor is not required.

If the General Assembly approves a petition without change, then the sponsor(s) may submit it to the Secretary of State to be placed on the ballot at the next general election. If the General Assembly amends or does not pass a petition, then the sponsor(s) may decide whether to place the amended version or the original unamended version on the ballot at the next general election. In cases where the General Assembly has approved a petition or when its amended version is submitted, a simple majority vote is required for passage. If a version not approved by the General Assembly is submitted, then a two-thirds majority vote is required. Time limits are specified in the amendment and sponsors will be able to submit petitions during either session of the General Assembly prior to the general election occurring every two years in November.

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill modifies the requirements of the initiative petition process. There are 33 states that do not have an initiative petition process.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Eggleston.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the initiative petition process allows people to get what they need when the political process doesn't provide it. Most changes to the Constitution are through HJRs and not initiative petition. This bill makes the process too stringent and we don't need to go back

to the legislature for permission. People's rights are important.

Testifying against the bill were American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations; United Steelworkers; Missouri National Education Association; American Federation of Teachers Missouri; Arnie C. Dienoff; Frances Klahr, Sierra Club; United for Missouri's Nearly 80,000 Members; Cozad Company, LLC, and First Rule.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill for the purpose of providing clarity.

Testifying on the bill was the Secretary of State's office.