

HB 1750 -- INITIATIVE PETITIONS

SPONSOR: Miller

This bill requires any individual who files an initiative or referendum petition and any individual who is paid to collect signatures for an initiative or referendum petition to register with the Missouri Ethics Commission as a lobbyist.

The bill requires each page of an initiative or referendum petition to advise petitioners of the crime of petition signature fraud and the penalties associated with the crime.

This bill requires any individual being paid to collect signatures for an initiative or referendum petition to be a resident of the state of Missouri for at least 180 days prior to the date the petition is filed with the Secretary of State.

Currently, petition signature fraud is a class A misdemeanor. This bill makes any second or subsequent conviction a class D felony.

This bill requires the Secretary of State to forward the name of any person who fraudulently signs an initiative petition to the Attorney General. It also grants the Attorney General concurrent jurisdiction with the local prosecutor to file charges for petition signature fraud.

The bill requires any person filing an initiative or referendum petition to be a U.S. citizen, a resident of Missouri, and a registered voter in Missouri for at least one year prior to the date of filing the petition.

This bill prohibits a person from filing more than one initiative petition proposing an amendment to the constitution per general election cycle. This applies only to petitions that are approved for circulation. It also imposes a fee of \$10,000 for filing a statutory initiative petition or referendum petition if the filing is the person's second or subsequent filing in that general election cycle, or if the person filing the petition is being compensated to do so.

If a court orders a change that substantially alters the content of the ballot title of an initiative petition or referendum, this bill invalidates any signature gathered prior to that date.

The bill also makes any entity that funds an initiative or referendum petition liable for any cause of action that arises out of the actions of an individual being paid to file, collect signatures, or otherwise support the petition.

This bill updates the definition of a "campaign committee" to include any entity that pays individuals to file initiative petitions and referendums or circulators to collect signatures for initiatives petitions and referendums and requires the committee to be register with the Ethics Commission.