

STATE OF MAINE

 IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND NINETEEN

 H.P. 391 - L.D. 534

An Act To Make Ballot Questions Easier To Read and Understand for Maine Voters

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the ability of voters to make informed choices on ballot questions is essential for the proper functioning of the State's citizen democracy; and

Whereas, this Act makes necessary improvements to the process of presenting referendum questions to the voters; and

Whereas, it is possible that referenda may be sent to the voters before the 90-day period has expired; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §906, sub-§6, ¶¶B and C, as repealed and replaced by PL 1993, c. 352, §3, are amended to read:

B. The Secretary of State shall write the question in a ~~simple~~, clear, concise and direct manner that describes the subject matter of the people's veto or direct initiative as simply as is possible.

C. The question for a direct initiative must be phrased so that an affirmative vote is in favor of the ~~people's veto or~~ direct initiative.

Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §906, sub-§8 is enacted to read:

8. Explanation of effect of "yes" or "no" vote. The Secretary of State shall include on the ballot for each referendum question those portions of the statement prepared by the Attorney General pursuant to Title 1, section 353 that describe what a "yes" vote favors and what a "no" vote opposes. These statements must appear directly below the relevant referendum question and above the place on the ballot for the voter to designate the voter's choice.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.