

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)

3 HOUSE BILL 1767

By: Roberts (Eric)

4
5
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to initiative and referendum;
8 amending 34 O.S. 2011, Section 9, as last amended by
9 Section 1, Chapter 281, O.S.L. 2018 (34 O.S. Supp.
10 2020, Section 9), which relates to ballot titles;
11 requiring certain ballot titles contain wording
12 descriptive of increased funding requirements; and
13 providing an effective date.

14 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

15 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 34 O.S. 2011, Section 9, as last
16 amended by Section 1, Chapter 281, O.S.L. 2018 (34 O.S. Supp. 2020,
17 Section 9), is amended to read as follows:

18 Section 9. A. When a referendum is ordered by petition of the
19 people against any measure passed by the Legislature or when any
20 measure is proposed by initiative petition, whether as an amendment
21 to the Constitution or as a statute, it shall be the duty of the
22 parties submitting the measure to prepare and file one copy of the
23 measure with the Secretary of State and one copy with the Attorney
24 General.

1 B. The parties submitting the measure shall also submit a
2 suggested ballot title to the Secretary of State which shall be
3 filed on a separate sheet of paper and shall not be part of or
4 printed on the petition. The suggested ballot title:

5 1. Shall not exceed two hundred words;

6 2. Shall explain in basic words, which can be easily found in
7 dictionaries of general usage, the effect of the proposition;

8 3. Shall not contain any words which have a special meaning for
9 a particular profession or trade not commonly known to the citizens
10 of this state;

11 4. Shall not reflect partiality in its composition or contain
12 any argument for or against the measure;

13 5. Shall contain language which clearly states that a "yes"
14 vote is a vote in favor of the proposition and a "no" vote is a vote
15 against the proposition; ~~and~~

16 6. Shall not contain language whereby a "yes" vote is, in fact,
17 a vote against the proposition and a "no" vote is, in fact, a vote
18 in favor of the proposition; and

19 7. Shall contain the language required by subsection E of this
20 section if applicable.

21 C. When a measure is proposed as a constitutional amendment by
22 the Legislature or when the Legislature proposes a statute
23 conditioned upon approval by the people:
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1 1. After final passage of a measure, the Secretary of State
2 shall submit the proposed ballot title to the Attorney General for
3 review as to legal correctness. Within five (5) business days after
4 receipt from the Secretary of State, the Attorney General shall, in
5 writing, notify the Secretary of State, the President Pro Tempore of
6 the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the
7 principal authors of the bill whether or not the proposed ballot
8 title complies with applicable laws. The Attorney General shall
9 state with specificity any and all defects found and, if necessary,
10 within ten (10) business days of determining that the proposed
11 ballot title is defective, prepare a preliminary ballot title which
12 complies with the law and furnish a copy of such ballot title to the
13 Secretary of State, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, the
14 Speaker of the House of Representatives and the principal authors of
15 the bill. The Attorney General may consider any comments made by
16 the President Pro Tempore of the Senate or the Speaker of the House
17 of Representatives submitted within five (5) business days of their
18 being furnished a copy of the preliminary ballot title. The
19 Attorney General shall respond in writing to the comments and shall
20 file a final ballot title with the Secretary of State no later than
21 fifteen (15) business days after furnishing the preliminary ballot
22 title; and

23 2. After receipt of the measure and the official ballot title,
24 as certified by the Attorney General, the Secretary of State shall

1 within five (5) days transmit to the Secretary of the State Election
2 Board an attested copy of the measure, including the official ballot
3 title.

4 D. The following procedure shall apply to ballot titles of
5 referendums ordered by a petition of the people or any measure
6 proposed by an initiative petition:

7 1. After the filing of the signed referendum petitions or the
8 signed initiative petitions, the Secretary of State shall submit the
9 proposed separate ballot title to the Attorney General for review as
10 to legal correctness. Within five (5) business days after the
11 receipt of the ballot title, the Attorney General shall, in writing,
12 notify the Secretary of State whether or not the proposed ballot
13 title complies with applicable laws. The Attorney General shall
14 state with specificity any and all defects found and, if necessary,
15 within ten (10) business days of determining that the proposed
16 ballot title is defective, prepare and file a ballot title which
17 complies with the law; and

18 2. Within ten (10) business days after completion of the review
19 and, if necessary, the filing of a ballot title in compliance with
20 law, by the Attorney General, the Secretary of State shall, if no
21 appeal is filed, transmit to the Secretary of the State Election
22 Board an attested copy of the measure, including the official ballot
23 title, and a certification that the requirements of this section
24 have been met. If an appeal is taken from such ballot title within

1 the time specified in Section 10 of this title, then the Secretary
2 of State shall certify to the Secretary of the State Election Board
3 the ballot title which is finally approved by the Supreme Court.

4 E. Any question to be submitted to a vote of the people,
5 whether pursuant to an initiative petition, a referendum petition
6 with respect to an enacted statute, or pursuant to a referred
7 measure by the Legislature, that would have the effect of increasing
8 the funding requirements of any department of state government,
9 including the legislative, the executive or judicial departments, or
10 any combination of such departments, shall contain a clear
11 statement, in language understandable by a reasonable person, that
12 if the proposal is approved, additional funding would be required by
13 the applicable department or departments of state government.

14 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2021.

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