

Office of the Vermont Secretary of State
Vermont State Archives

1991: Proposal 18
Subject: Direct initiative

PROPOSAL 18

Sec. 1. Article 22nd of Chapter I of the Vermont Constitution is added to read:

ARTICLE 22nd. [DIRECT INITIATIVE]

The people may, by written petition certified, cause to be placed on the general election ballot any measure to enact, amend or repeal state law. The petition shall be by legal voters, shall contain no more than 25 percent of signatures from any single county in the state and shall also contain a number of signatures no less than ten percent of ballots cast in the last gubernatorial election preceding the filing of the petition. The date each signature was made shall be written next to the signature on the petition and no signature older than one year from the written date on the petition shall be valid.

The initiative measure, as it shall appear on the ballot, and a filing deposit shall be filed with the Secretary of State not later than 5:00 p.m. on the third Monday of July preceding a general election. An initiative measure embracing more than one subject may not be submitted to the people or have any effect. No more than five initiative measures may appear on the ballot at any single general election and the first five initiatives' measures submitted to the Secretary of State and for which signatures are verified shall be placed on the ballot.

Upon verification of the petition's signatures, the Secretary of State shall return the filing deposit to the person who filed it and shall order the measure to be submitted to the people at the next general election and such order shall be sufficient to enable the people to vote. The Secretary of State shall also provide

information of an impartial nature to the people to enable them to make an informed decision about the measure before them.

Any initiative filed by the people and approved by a majority of the votes given thereon shall, unless a later date is specified in the initiative, take effect and become a law 30 days after the Governor has made public proclamation of the result of the vote on the initiative, which the Governor shall do within ten days after the vote thereon has been canvassed and determined. The veto power of the Governor shall not extend to any measure approved by the people. Nor shall the General Assembly repeal any measure so enacted within two years of its effective date.

Any initiative filed by the people and disapproved by a majority of the votes given thereon, shall not be eligible for a petition and vote for four years from the date of its defeat. The Attorney General shall determine if a measure being proposed for a general election ballot is the same as one that was defeated within the preceding four years.

If provisions of two or more measures approved at the same election conflict, those of the measure receiving the highest affirmative vote shall prevail.

Until the General Assembly shall enact further laws not inconsistent with the Constitution for applying the people's initiative, the election officers and other officials shall be governed by the provisions of this Constitution and of the general law, supplemented by such reasonable action as may be necessary to render this section self-executing. The General Assembly may enact laws not inconsistent with this article of the Constitution to establish procedures for filing and determination of the validity of written petitions.