

State of Arkansas
95th General Assembly
Regular Session, 2025

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1221

By: Representative Ray
By: Senator K. Hammer

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO AMEND ARKANSAS LAW CONCERNING INITIATIVES,
REFERENDA, AND CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS; TO DECLARE
AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO AMEND ARKANSAS LAW CONCERNING
INITIATIVES, REFERENDA, AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS; AND TO
DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 7-9-103, concerning the signing of initiative or referendum petitions, is amended to add an additional subsection to read as follows:

(e) A signature on an initiative or referendum petition is not valid and shall not be counted for any purpose if the signature was obtained after the date of the next general election following the certification of the ballot title and popular name under § 7-9-107.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 7-9-107, concerning the filing of the original draft of a proposed measure with the Attorney General before circulation, is amended to add an additional subsection to read as follows:

(g) The certification of a ballot title and popular name under this section shall expire on the date of the next general election after the certification of the ballot title and popular name.



SECTION 3. Arkansas Code § 7-9-126(c), concerning the counting of signatures on initiative and referendum petitions, is amended to read as follows:

(c) The following signatures shall not be counted for any purpose by the official charged with verifying the signatures, including the initial count of signatures:

- (1) A signature that is not an original signature;
- (2) A signature that is obviously not that of the purported petitioner;
- (3) A signature that is illegible;
- (4) A signature that is not accompanied by personally identifying information;
- (5) A signature for which the corresponding printed name, address, birth date, or date of signing is written by someone other than the signer except under circumstances of disability of the signer;
- (6) A signature obtained before the submission and approval of the ballot title under § 7-9-107;
- (7) A signature obtained after the date of the next general election following the certification of the ballot title and popular name under § 7-9-107; and
- ~~(7)~~(8) A signature that has any other material defect that, on its face, renders the signature invalid.

SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY. The provisions of this act are declared to be severable and the invalidity of any provision of this act shall not affect other provisions of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision.

SECTION 5. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the process for citizens to propose initiated acts and amendments to the Arkansas Constitution is critical to a well-functioning democracy in this state; that it is of the utmost importance that the integrity of the initiative process be strengthened through this act so that voters maintain a high degree of confidence in the actions of government; that few things are more important

to the public peace, health, and safety than maintaining trust in the actions of government; that the changes to the initiative process under this act are critical to ensure that integrity is maintained in the initiative process; and that any delay in the implementation of this act would disrupt the initiative process for the 2026 general election, which would have a detrimental effect on the public peace, health, and safety of Arkansas. Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this act being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective on:

- (1) The date of its approval by the Governor;
- (2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor, the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the bill; or
- (3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

APPROVED: 2/25/25