

**BALLOT LANGUAGE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVE NO. \*\*\* (CI-\*\*\*)**

**CONSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVE NO. \*\*\***

**A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY INITIATIVE PETITION**

The Montana constitution reserves to the people the powers of initiative and referendum. CI-\*\*\* amends the constitution to protect this fundamental right from unjustified interference by the government. Specifically, CI-\*\*\* requires impartial, predictable, open, and timely processes for ballot issues, including approving petitions and ballot statements, resolving legal challenges, and verifying signatures. It requires the state to allow ample time for signature gathering, and prohibits disqualification of petitions because of minor or technical issues and allows voters to withdraw their signatures if they choose.

☐ YES on Constitutional Initiative CI-\*\*\*

☐ NO on Constitutional Initiative CI-\*\*\*

## THE COMPLETE TEXT OF CONSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVE NO. \*\*\* (CI-\*\*\*)

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. **Section 1.** Article II of The Constitution of the State of Montana is amended by adding a new section 37 that reads:

**Section 37. Right to Initiative and Referendum.** (1) The people have a fundamental right to exercise their powers of initiative and referendum under Article III and Article XIV. The government may not deny or burden this right unless justified by a compelling government interest achieved by the least restrictive means.

(2) This right guarantees impartial, predictable, transparent, and expeditious processes for proposing, qualifying for the ballot, and submitting ballot issues to the qualified electors without interference from the government or the use of government resources to support or oppose the ballot issue. This right includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Proposing a ballot issue by submitting the full text of the ballot issue and proposed ballot statements, with the government modifying the proposed ballot statements only if they are not a true and impartial explanation expressed in plain, easily understood language;
- (b) Obtaining a determination regarding whether the ballot issue and ballot statements are legally sufficient for submission to the qualified electors prior to the petition being approved for circulation;
- (c) The resolution of legal challenges to the determination made in subsection (2)(b) and the issuance of an approved petition for circulation within 90 days of the initial submission of the ballot issue to the government;
- (d) Reasonably ample time to gather signatures without unjustified burdens on signature gathering, signature gatherers, or the preparation or submission of signed petitions;
- (e) Verification of signatures and petitions without the invalidation of any signature or petition due to a technical or minor deficiency;
- (f) The ability to withdraw one's signature from a petition, with the deadline for such withdrawal being the same as the deadline for submitting signed petitions to the government;
- (g) The resolution of legal challenges to the qualification of a ballot issue for the ballot prior to the deadline for finalizing ballots for the election; and
- (h) Submission of a ballot issue to the qualified electors in an impartial manner for their approval or rejection by a majority of those voting thereon at a single election.

NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Self-Executing.** [This act] is self-executing.

NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on approval by the electorate.