

Alaska Legislature

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Sponsor Statement – House Bill 274

"An Act relating to public hearings on initiatives and referenda scheduled to appear on the ballot; and providing for an effective date."

The Alaska Legislature passed comprehensive legislation (HB 36) reforming the state's initiative process in 2010. That legislation, known as the Open and Transparent Initiative Act, made significant improvements to the existing initiative process.

It mandated financial disclosure statements from the initiative sponsors, required signature gatherers to carry a copy of the ballot initiative and public hearings (two per judicial district) across the state.

House Bill 274 extends the public hearing and legislative review requirements to include referendums.

- The lieutenant governor will hold at least two public hearings on the referendum in each judicial district at least 30 days before the election that will have the referendum on the ballot
- A standing committee of the legislature, selected jointly by the presiding officers of house and senate, will hold a minimum of one hearing on the referendum
- A legislative hearing must be held within 30 days of the convening of the legislative session preceding the statewide election that the referendum will be voted on

These common sense steps give Alaskans the opportunity to learn more about a referendum before entering the voting booth and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

HB 274 was referred to the House State Affairs and Judiciary Committees.

Prepared by Jeff Turner on January 28, 2014