

**SB**

**172**

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATOR  
**Gene Therriault**  
119 N. Cushman Suite 101  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
(907) 488-0857  
FAX (907) 488-4271



While in Juneau  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska  
99801-1182  
(907) 465-4797  
FAX (907) 465-3884

Senate  
Senate District F

Senate Bill 172

"An Act relating to the presentation  
of initiatives and referenda on the ballot."

SPONSOR: Senator Gene Therriault

## SPONSOR STATEMENT:

AS 15.45.180(a) currently provides that once an initiative petition is certified as containing the number of valid signatures required for placement on the ballot, the lieutenant governor shall prepare both a ballot title and a proposition for the election ballot. The same mechanism applies at AS 15.45.410(a) for referenda. Under existing law, the ballot title must indicate the "general subject of the proposition," and may not exceed six words. The proposition must give a "true and impartial summary" of the proposed law, in not more than 100 words.

With the increasing complexity of laws being proposed by initiative, it is difficult to provide an accurate description of the contents of a proposed law in only six words. Likewise, the Legislature is currently taking on more controversial and complex legislation that some voter groups may attempt to overturn through use of the referendum.

The current word length limitations on ballot titles contributes to the likelihood that voters will not fully understand the scope and effect of initiative propositions and referenda that are placed before them. Allowing the lieutenant governor up to 25 words for the ballot title will provide the opportunity for a more accurate description of the contents of the proposed law.

AMENDMENT #1

Ad Hoc

OFFERED IN HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS  
TO SB 172

After line 8 insert a new subsection to read:

AS 15.45.180 (c)

"The lieutenant governor shall submit the ballot title and proposition to the director not later than 30 days after the date of the adjournment of the first regular legislative session convened after the petition is filed"

AMENDMENT

#2 Adm

OFFERED IN HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS  
TO SB 172

After line 14 insert a new subsection to read:

AS 15.45.410 (c)

"The lieutenant governor shall submit the ballot title and proposition to the director not later than 60 days after the date the petition is filed."

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: 1  
 Bill Version: SB 172  
 (S) Publish Date: 4/20/05

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: OOG  
 Title "An Act relating to the presentation RDU Elections  
of initiatives and referenda on the ballot." Component Elections  
 Sponsor Senate Therriault  
 Requester Senate State Affairs Committee Component No. 21

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claim						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost: 0.0  
 Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)  
 This legislation has no fiscal impact on the Division of Elections.

Prepared by: Gail Fenuriani, Asst. Admin. Director Phone 465-3885  
 Division: Office of the Governor, Division of Administrative Services Date/Time 4/19/05 9:10 AM  
 Approved by: Laura Glaiser, Director Date 4/19/2005  
 Agency: Division of Elections



## Alaska State Legislature

Senate Majority Web: [www.akrepublicans.org](http://www.akrepublicans.org)

Sponsor: Senator Gene Therriault

Current Version: SB 172

Contact: Joseph Balash, 465-4797

### Fact Sheet for: Senate Bill 172

**Short Title:** INITIATIVE/REFERENDUM BALLOT SUMMARY

**Summary:**

- Increases the word limit for initiative and referenda ballot titles from six words to 25 words.

**Benefits:**

- Provides the opportunity for a more accurate description of laws proposed by initiative or potentially overturned by referenda.

**Background:**

- AS 15.45.180(a) currently provides that once an initiative petition is certified as containing the number of valid signatures required for placement on the ballot, the lieutenant governor shall prepare both a ballot title and a proposition for the election ballot. The same mechanism applies at AS 15.45.410(a) for referenda. Under existing law, the ballot title must indicate the "general subject of the proposition," and may not exceed six words. The proposition must give a "true and impartial summary" of the proposed law, in not more than 100 words.

With the increasing complexity of laws proposed by initiative, it is difficult to provide an accurate description of the contents of a proposed law in only six words. Likewise, the Legislature is currently taking on more controversial and complex legislation that some voter groups may attempt to overturn through use of the referendum.

The current word length limitations on ballot titles contributes to the likelihood that voters will not fully understand the scope and effect of initiative propositions and referenda that are placed before them.

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**"An Act repealing the economic limit factor as it applies to oil."**

**05RELF**

**AG's File Number: 663-05-0151**

**Primary Sponsors: Ray Metcalfe, Robert L. Buch, James Price**

**Contact Information -**

**Application was received in the Lieutenant Governor's Office on January 18, 2005. A copy of the application and signatures were sent to the Department of Law and Division of Elections on January 21, 2005. The Division of Elections determined that there were a sufficient number of sponsor signatures on February 7, 2005. The application was certified on March 21, 2005. Petition booklets will be distributed to the sponsors for circulation.**

**[Click here for the 05RELF proposed bill language as provided by the sponsors.](#)**

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**"An Initiative requiring the State of Alaska to vote on an Act providing children and their family specific rights when children are in the custody of State children services."**

**04FCRB**

**AG's File Number:**

**Primary Sponsors: Elizabeth H. Rollins, Charles H. Rollins Jr., Susan Roatch**

**Contact Information -**

**Application was received in the Lieutenant Governor's Office on March 23, 2004. A copy of the application and signatures were sent to the Department of Law and Division of Elections on April 2, 2004.**

**[Click here for the 04FCRB proposed bill language as provided by the sponsors.](#)**

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**"An Act relating to contribution limits, lobbyists, and disclosure."**

**03DISC**

**AG's File Number: 663-04-0025**

**Primary Sponsors: Harry Crawford, Eric Croft, David Guttenberg**

**Contact Information - Karen Compton, 227-2527, [www.trust-the-people.org](http://www.trust-the-people.org)**

**Application was received in the Lieutenant Governor's Office on September 4, 2003. A copy of the application and signatures were sent to the Department of Law and Division of Elections on September 5, 2003. The Division of Elections determined that there were a sufficient number of sponsor signatures on September 11, 2003.**

**[Click here for the 03DISC proposed bill language as provided by the sponsors.](#)**

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**"An Act relating to filling a vacancy in the Office of United States Senator."**

**03SENV**

**AG's File Number: 663-04-024**

**Primary Sponsors: Harry Crawford, Eric Croft, David Guttenberg**

**Contact Information - Karen Compton, 227-2527, [www.trust-the-people.org](http://www.trust-the-people.org)**

**Application was received in the Lieutenant Governor's Office on September 4, 2003. A copy of the application and signatures were sent to the Department of Law and Division of Elections on September 5, 2003. The Division of Elections determined that there were a sufficient number of sponsor signatures on September 11, 2003. Legal review was received from the Department of Law and was determined that the Seventeenth Amendment of the United States Constitution gives state legislatures sole authority to decide how to fill U.S. Senate vacancies.; therefore, the application was denied on October 22, 2003. Lawsuit has been filed. Court ruled that petition booklets were to be issued to the initiative committee not later than November 3, 2003. Petition booklets were distributed to initiative committee at 3pm, November 3, 2003. Lieutenant Governor Leman certified the petition for this initiative as properly filed on March 4, 2004. Lieutenant Governor Leman determined that House Bill 414 was "substantially similar" to the petition and that the petition would not appear on the 2004 general election ballot. A lawsuit has been filed to determine whether HB 414 is "substantially similar" to the petition.**

**[Click here for the 03SENV proposed bill language as provided by the sponsors.](#)**

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