

Statewide Initiatives Amendments

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Lincoln Fillmore

House Sponsor: Jason B. Kyle

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill amends provisions relating to a statewide initiative.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- modifies requirements for a statewide initiative application and a fiscal impact statement in relation to funding a law proposed by initiative;
 - requires initiative petition sponsors to publish the initiative application in the same manner required for publication of a proposed constitutional amendment;
 - prohibits submission of an initiative, or counting votes cast for or against an initiative, if the sponsors of the initiative petition fail to comply with the publication requirement;
- and
- makes technical changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

20A-7-202 (Effective upon governor's approval), as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 107

20A-7-202.5 (Effective upon governor's approval), as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 442

20A-7-211 (Effective 01/01/27), as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 107

ENACTS:

28 **20A-7-209.5 (Effective 01/01/27), Utah Code Annotated 1953**

29

30 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

31 Section 1. Section **20A-7-202** is amended to read:

32 **20A-7-202 (Effective upon governor's approval). Statewide initiative process --**
33 **Initiative application procedures -- Time to gather signatures -- Grounds for rejection.**

34 (1) Individuals wishing to circulate an initiative petition shall file an initiative application
35 with the lieutenant governor.

36 (2) The initiative application shall include:

37 (a) the name and residence address of at least five sponsors of the initiative petition;

38 (b) a statement indicating that each of the sponsors is registered to vote in Utah;

39 (c) a statement indicating whether the initiative will be presented to:

40 (i) the Legislature under Subsection 20A-7-201(1); or

41 (ii) a vote of the people under Subsection 20A-7-201(2);

42 (d) the signature of each of the sponsors, attested to by a notary public; and

43 ~~[(e) a copy of the proposed law that includes, in the following order:]~~

44 ~~[(i) the title of the proposed law, that clearly expresses the subject of the law;]~~

45 ~~[(ii) a description of all proposed sources of funding for the costs associated with the~~
46 ~~proposed law, including the proposed percentage of total funding from each~~
47 ~~source; and]~~

48 ~~[(iii) the text of the proposed law;]~~

49 (e) the following, in the following order:

50 (i) the title of the proposed law that clearly expresses the subject of the law;

51 (ii) except as provided in Subsection (3)(c), a description of the manner in which the
52 proposed law will be funded, including:

53 (A) all proposed sources of funding for the costs associated with the proposed law,
54 including the proposed percentage of total funding from each source;

55 (B) if the proposed law will be funded, in whole or in part, by a new tax, a
56 description of the new tax and the tax rate;

57 ~~[(f)]~~ (C) if the [initiative proposes] proposed law will be funded, in whole or in

58 part, by a tax increase, the following statement for each tax increase, "This
59 initiative seeks to increase the current (insert name of tax) rate by (insert the
60 tax percentage difference) percent, resulting in a(n) (insert the tax percentage
61 increase) percent increase in the current tax rate."; ~~[and]~~

- 62 (D) if the proposed law will be funded, in whole or in part, from new revenues, a
63 description of the amount and source of the new revenues; and
64 (E) if the proposed law will be funded, in whole or in part, from existing revenues,
65 a description of the existing line items or programs that will receive less
66 funding in order to fund the proposed law and the amount by which the
67 funding will be reduced;
68 [~~(g)~~] (iii) a statement indicating whether persons gathering signatures for the initiative
69 petition may be paid for gathering signatures[:]; and
70 (iv) the text of the proposed law.
71 (3)(a) An individual's status as a resident, under Subsection (2), is determined in
72 accordance with Section 20A-2-105.
73 (b) The initiative application and the initiative application's contents are public when
74 filed with the lieutenant governor.
75 (c) If the fiscal impact of the law proposed by an initiative is less than the amount
76 specified by joint legislative rule for designating a bill as a fiscal note bill:
77 (i) the initiative application is not required to include the description described in
78 Subsection (2)(e)(ii); and
79 (ii) the lieutenant governor may not reject the initiative application or initiative
80 application addendum under Subsection (5)(c).
81 (4) If the initiative petition fails to qualify for the ballot of the election described in
82 Subsection 20A-7-201(2)(b), the sponsors shall:
83 (a) submit a new initiative application;
84 (b) obtain new signature sheets; and
85 (c) collect signatures again.
86 (5) The lieutenant governor shall reject an initiative application or an initiative application
87 addendum filed under Subsection 20A-7-204.1(5) and not issue signature sheets if:
88 (a) the proposed law:
89 (i) is [~~patently~~] unconstitutional;
90 (ii) is nonsensical;
91 (iii) could not become law if passed;
92 (iv) contains more than one subject as evaluated in accordance with Subsection (6); or
93 (v) is identical or substantially similar to a law proposed by an initiative for which
94 signatures were submitted to the county clerks and lieutenant governor for
95 certification within two years preceding the date on which the initiative

- 96 application for the new initiative is filed;~~[-or]~~
- 97 (b) the subject of the proposed law is not clearly expressed in the law's title[:] ; or
- 98 (c) except as provided in Subsection (3)(c), the lieutenant governor determines, after
- 99 consultation with the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst, that the funding
- 100 description, described in Subsection (2)(e)(ii):
- 101 (i) does not comply with the requirements of Subsection (2)(e)(ii); or
- 102 (ii) is unlikely to provide adequate funding for the proposed law.
- 103 (6) To evaluate whether the proposed law contains more than one subject under Subsection
- 104 (5)(a)(iv), the lieutenant governor shall apply the same standard provided in Utah
- 105 Constitution, Article VI, Section 22, which prohibits a bill from passing that contains
- 106 more than one subject.
- 107 Section 2. Section **20A-7-202.5** is amended to read:
- 108 **20A-7-202.5 (Effective upon governor's approval). Initial fiscal impact statement**
- 109 **-- Preparation of statement -- Challenge to statement.**
- 110 (1) Within three working days after the day on which the lieutenant governor receives an
- 111 initiative application, the lieutenant governor shall submit a copy of the initiative
- 112 application to the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst.
- 113 (2)(a) [~~The~~] Except as provided in Subsection (2)(b), the Office of the Legislative Fiscal
- 114 Analyst shall prepare an unbiased, good faith initial fiscal impact statement for the
- 115 proposed law, not exceeding 100 words plus 100 words per revenue source created or
- 116 impacted by the proposed law, that contains:
- 117 (i) a description of the total estimated fiscal impact of the proposed law over the time
- 118 period or time periods determined by the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst
- 119 to be most useful in understanding the estimated fiscal impact of the proposed law;
- 120 (ii) if the proposed law would increase taxes, decrease taxes, or impose a new tax, a
- 121 dollar amount representing the total estimated increase or decrease for each type
- 122 of tax affected under the proposed law, a dollar amount showing the estimated
- 123 amount of a new tax, and a dollar amount representing the total estimated increase
- 124 or decrease in taxes under the proposed law;
- 125 (iii) if the proposed law would increase a particular tax or tax rate, the tax percentage
- 126 difference and the tax percentage increase for each tax or tax rate increased;
- 127 (iv) if the proposed law will be funded, in whole or in part, from new revenues, a
- 128 description of the amount and source of the new revenues;
- 129 (v) if the proposed law will be funded, in whole or in part, from existing revenues, a

description of:

(A) the existing line items or programs that will receive less funding in order to fund the proposed law and the amount by which the funding will be reduced;
and

(B) the likely impact of the reduction in funding described in Subsection (2)(a)(v)(A);

~~[(iv)]~~ (vi) if the proposed law would result in the issuance or a change in the status of bonds, notes, or other debt instruments, a dollar amount representing the total estimated increase or decrease in public debt under the proposed law;

~~[(v)]~~ (vii) a dollar amount representing the estimated cost or savings, if any, to state or local government entities under the proposed law;

~~[(vi)]~~ (viii) if the proposed law would increase costs to state government, a listing of all sources of funding for the estimated costs; and

~~[(vii)]~~ (ix) a concise description and analysis titled "Funding Source," not to exceed 100 words for each funding source, of the funding source information described in Subsection 20A-7-202(2)(e)(ii).

(b) If the proposed law is estimated to have ~~[no]~~ fiscal impact of less than the amount specified by joint legislative rule for designating a bill as a fiscal note bill, the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst shall ~~[include a summary statement in the initial fiscal impact statement in substantially the following form]~~ prepare the initial fiscal impact statement to read substantially as follows:

"The Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst estimates that the law proposed by this initiative would have no significant fiscal impact and would not result in either an increase or decrease in taxes or debt."

(3) Within 25 calendar days after the day on which the lieutenant governor delivers a copy of the initiative application, the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst shall:

(a) send a copy of the initial fiscal impact statement to the lieutenant governor's office;
and

(b) send a copy of the initial fiscal impact statement to the first five sponsors named in the initiative application.

(4)(a)(i) Three or more of the sponsors of the initiative petition may, within 20 calendar days after the day on which the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst delivers the initial fiscal impact statement to the lieutenant governor's office, file a petition with the appropriate court, alleging that the initial fiscal impact statement,

164 taken as a whole, is an inaccurate estimate of the fiscal impact of the initiative.

165 (ii) After receipt of the appeal, the court shall direct the lieutenant governor to send
166 notice of the petition filed with the court to:

167 (A) any person or group that has filed an argument with the lieutenant governor's
168 office for or against the initiative that is the subject of the challenge; and

169 (B) any political issues committee established under Section 20A-11-801 that has
170 filed written or electronic notice with the lieutenant governor that identifies the
171 name, mailing or email address, and telephone number of the person
172 designated to receive notice about any issues relating to the initiative.

173 (b)(i) There is a presumption that the initial fiscal impact statement prepared by the
174 Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst is based upon reasonable assumptions,
175 uses reasonable data, and applies accepted analytical methods to present the
176 estimated fiscal impact of the initiative.

177 (ii) The court may not revise the contents of, or direct the revision of, the initial fiscal
178 impact statement unless the plaintiffs rebut the presumption by clear and
179 convincing evidence that establishes that the initial fiscal impact statement, taken
180 as a whole, is an inaccurate statement of the estimated fiscal impact of the
181 initiative.

182 (iii) The court may refer an issue related to the initial fiscal impact statement to a
183 master to examine the issue and make a report in accordance with Utah Rules of
184 Civil Procedure, Rule 53.

185 (c) The court shall certify to the lieutenant governor a fiscal impact statement for the
186 initiative that meets the requirements of this section.

187 Section 3. Section **20A-7-209.5** is enacted to read:

188 **20A-7-209.5 (Effective 01/01/27). Initiative application -- Required publication.**

189 (1) The sponsors shall publish the entire initiative application in the same manner required
190 for a constitutional amendment under Utah Constitution, Article XXIII, Section 1.

191 (2) If the sponsors fail to comply with Subsection (1):

192 (a) the initiative cannot be submitted to the voters; and

193 (b) an election officer may not count votes cast for or against the initiative.

194 Section 4. Section **20A-7-211** is amended to read:

195 **20A-7-211 (Effective 01/01/27). Return and canvass -- Conflicting measures --**

196 **Law effective on proclamation.**

197 (1) [The] Except as provided in Subsection 20A-7-209.5(2), the votes on the law proposed

by the initiative petition shall be counted, canvassed, and delivered as provided in [Title 20A, Chapter 4, Part 3, Canvassing Returns] Chapter 4, Part 3, Canvassing Returns.

(2) ~~[After]~~ Except as provided in Subsection 20A-7-209.5(2), after the state board of canvassers completes the canvass, the lieutenant governor shall certify to the governor the vote for and against the law proposed by the initiative petition.

(3)(a) ~~[The]~~ Except as provided in Subsection 20A-7-209.5(2), the governor shall immediately issue a proclamation that:

- (i) gives the total number of votes cast in the state for and against each law proposed by an initiative petition; and
- (ii) declares those laws proposed by an initiative petition that are approved by majority vote to be in full force and effect on the date described in Subsection 20A-7-212(2).

(b) When the governor believes that two proposed laws, or that parts of two proposed laws approved by the people at the same election are entirely in conflict, the governor shall proclaim as law the initiative that receives the greatest number of affirmative votes, regardless of the difference in the majorities which those initiatives receive.

(c) Within 10 days after the day of the governor's proclamation, any qualified voter who signed the initiative petition proposing the law that is declared by the governor to be superseded by another initiative approved at the same election may bring an action in the appropriate court to review the governor's decision.

(4) Within 10 days after the day on which the court issues an order in an action described in Subsection (3)(c), the governor shall:

- (a) proclaim as law all initiatives approved by the people that the court determines are not entirely in conflict; and
- (b) of the initiatives approved by the people that the court determines to be entirely in conflict, proclaim as law, regardless of the difference in majorities, the law that receives the greatest number of affirmative votes, to be in full force and effect on the date described in Subsection 20A-7-212(2).

Section 5. **Effective Date.**

(1) Except as provided in Subsection (2), this bill takes effect:

- (a) except as provided in Subsection (1)(b), May 7, 2025; or
- (b) if approved by two-thirds of all members elected to each house:
 - (i) upon approval by the governor;
 - (ii) without the governor's signature, the day following the constitutional time limit of

232 Utah Constitution, Article VII, Section 8; or
233 (iii) in the case of a veto, the date of veto override.
234 (2) The actions affecting the following sections take effect on January 1, 2027:
235 (a) Section 20A-7-211 (Effective 01/01/27); and
236 (b) Section 20A-7-209.5 (Effective 01/01/27).