



Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Court

INITIATIVE PETITIONS by Steven T. James, House Clerk

There are two types of Initiative Petitions, they are:

1. Initiative petitions to amend the Constitution
2. Initiative petitions to amend general laws

Subsequent to the Initiative petition being submitted to the House Clerk, the following procedures will take place, regardless of the type of Initiative petition:

Referred to a joint committee;

A public hearing is then held;

When reported, majority and minority reports are required;

Legislative substitutes in the form of Resolutions are in order. Such legislative substitute resolutions do not go to the Governor and may be voted upon subsequent to the deadline established for the approval of initiative petitions. Legislative substitutes for Initiative Petitions for changes in law must be approved by a roll call vote of both branches. Legislative substitutes for an Initiative amendment to the Constitution must be approved by a roll call vote in joint session [See Opinions of the Justices, Suffolk SS. No. 76-243 Civ.].

**Different legislative procedures are required for each type of Initiative petition.
Those procedures are as follows:**

Initiative Petition for an amendment to the Constitution:

The Senate Clerk had determined that an Initiative Amendment must be reported by committee no later than the last Wednesday in April (see Joint Rule 23);

Must be laid before the Joint Session not later than the second Wednesday in May;