

C-32	Initiative Signature Gathering Time Lines	Hanek	Article 5, Section 5.40
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Extends the time to collect Initiative signatures from 120 to 150 days.

Sponsor of Proposal

Commissioner Hanek

Brief Summary of Proposal:

Section 5.40 To allow for more time to gather the citizen signatures by lengthening the time limit to collect and to shorten the number of days prior to the day of a general election for ballot measures.

Proposed Charter Amendment:

Section 5.40 Initiative Procedures

(1) Any legal voter, or organization of legal voters of Pierce County may file an initiative proposal with the filing officer who, within five business days after receipt thereof, shall give the proposed initiative a number, which shall thereafter be the identifying number for the measure. The filing voter or organization shall submit the petition in substantially the same form and style as prescribed for state initiatives by Chapter 29A.72 RCW and Chapter 434-379 WAC, as now enacted or hereinafter amended.

(2) The filing officer shall then transmit a copy of the proposal to the Prosecuting Attorney who, within 15 business days after receipt thereof, shall formulate a concise statement, posed as a positive question, not to exceed 20 words, which shall express and give a true and impartial statement of the purpose of the measure. Such concise statement will be the ballot title.

(3) The petitioner shall then have ~~120~~ 150 calendar days to collect the signatures of the registered voters of the County equal in number to not less than 10 percent of the number of votes cast (to include votes cast for candidates and write-ins,

not to include overvotes or undervotes) in the County in the last election for the office of Executive. Each petition shall contain the full text of the proposed measure, ordinance, or amendment to an ordinance and the ballot title.

(4) The filing officer shall verify the sufficiency of the signatures on the petition, and if it is validated, submit the proposal to the people at the next general election that is not less than ~~420~~ 90 calendar days after submittal of signatures to the filing officer for validation, unless the Council enacts the proposal without change or amendment.

(5) If the Council does not adopt the proposed measure and adopts a substitute measure concerning the same subject matter, the substitute proposal shall be placed on the same ballot with the initiative proposal; and the voters shall be given the choice of accepting either or rejecting both and then be given the choice of accepting one and rejecting the other. If a majority of the voters voting on the first issue is for accepting either, then the measure receiving the majority of the votes cast on the second issue shall be deemed approved. If a majority of those voting on the first issue is for rejecting both, then neither measure shall be approved regardless of the vote on the second issue.

Rationale for Proposal:

To allow for more time for the citizens to gather signatures by lengthening the time limit to collect and to shorten the number of days prior to the day of a general election for ballot measures. This allows for a greater ability to get the signatures.

DPA Review of Proposal

Date:
4/14/2026

Proposal No.:
C-32

Topic:

Initiative Signature Gathering

DPA:

Katie Blinn

Legal Review:

The proposal makes two changes relating to signature petitions for initiatives:

The time for collecting signatures is extended from 120 calendar days to 150 calendar days. This change is likely within the authority of a charter county.

The deadline for placing a validated initiative on the General Election ballot is shortened from 120 calendar days before the General Election to 90 calendar days before the General Election. Current State law requires that the County Auditor be notified no later than the day of the Primary in order to place a measure on the General Election ballot. ([RCW 29A.04.321\(3\)](#)) The date of the Primary is the first Tuesday of August. ([RCW 29A.04.311](#)) This deadline applies to *all* jurisdictions. ([RCW 29A.04.321\(5\)](#); [RCW 29A.04.330\(3\) and \(5\)](#)) A deadline of 90 days before the General Election may fall *after* the day of the Primary. For example, this year, it will be Wednesday, August 5, the day *after* the Primary. In order to avoid litigation and align the deadline in the Charter with the deadline in State law, consider rephrasing the sentence to:

(4) The filing officer shall verify the sufficiency of the signatures on the petition, and if it is validated, submit the proposal to the people at the next general election consistent with State law and based on the last day signature petitions were submitted ~~that is not less than 120 calendar days after submittal of signatures~~ to the filing officer for validation, unless the Council enacts the proposal without change or amendment.

Other Feedback/Comments/Recommendations:

The proposal could also include a technical amendment to add a comma after “or organization of legal voters” in the following sentence:

(1) Any legal voter, or organization of legal voters, of Pierce County may file an initiative proposal with the

filing officer who, within five business days after receipt thereof, shall give the proposed initiative a number, which shall thereafter be the identifying number for the measure.

Summary Points

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Submit written testimony

By Email: katey.hobbs@piercecountywa.gov

By Web Form: <https://www.piercecountywa.gov/FormCenter/Charter-Review-41/Provide-Written-Public-Comment-893>

Submitted public testimony

Names in **RED** = CON

Names in **GREEN** = PRO

As of 4-10-26 = **1 CON** ~ **0 PRO**

Packet
