

### §1323. Charter amendments; procedure

**1. County commissioners.** The county commissioners may determine that amendments to the county charter should be considered and, by order, provide for notice and hearing on them in the same manner as provided in subsection 4, paragraph A. Within 7 days after the hearing, the county commissioners may order the proposed amendment to be placed on a ballot at the next regular or special statewide election held in the county at least 30 days after the order is passed.

A. Each amendment shall be limited to a single subject, but more than one section of the charter may be amended as long as it is germane to that subject. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

B. Alternative statements of a single amendment are prohibited. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]  
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**2. Petition by voters.** On the written petition of a number of voters equal to at least 10% of the number of votes cast in a county at the last gubernatorial election the county commissioners shall, by order, provide that the proposed amendments to the county charter be placed on a ballot in accordance with the following procedures.

A. Each amendment shall be limited to a single subject, but more than one section of the charter may be amended as long as it is germane to that subject. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

B. Alternative statements of a single amendment are prohibited. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]  
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**3. Petition procedure.** The petition forms shall carry the following legend in bold lettering at the top of the face of each form.

"County of ...."

"Each of the undersigned voters respectfully requests the county commissioners to provide for the amendment of the county charter as set out below."

No more than one subject may be included in a petition.

In all other respects, the form, content and procedures governing amendment petitions are the same as provided for charter revision and adoption petitions under section 1321, including procedures relating to filing, sufficiency and amendments.

**4. Action on petition.** The following procedures shall be followed upon receipt of a report that a petition is sufficient.

A. Within 10 days after receiving a report that a petition is sufficient, the county commissioners shall, by order, provide for a public hearing on the proposed amendment. At least 10 days before the hearing, they shall publish a notice of the hearing in a newspaper having general circulation in the county. The notice must contain the text of the proposed amendment and a brief explanation. The hearing shall be conducted by the county commissioners or a committee appointed by them.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

B. Within 7 days after public hearing, the county commissioners or the committee appointed by them shall file with the county clerk a report containing the final draft of the proposed amendment and a written opinion by an attorney admitted to the bar of this State that the proposed amendment does not conflict with the general laws, the United States Constitution or the Constitution of Maine. In the case of a committee report, a copy shall also be filed with the county commissioners. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

C. On all petitions filed more than 120 days before the end of the current county fiscal year, the county commissioners shall order the proposed amendment to be submitted to the voters of the county at the next regular or special statewide election held within that year after the final report is filed. If no such election is held before the end of the current county fiscal year, the county commissioners may order a special election to be held before the end of the current county fiscal year for the purpose of voting on the proposed amendment. Unrelated charter amendments shall be submitted to the voters as separate questions. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

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**5. Summary.** When the county commissioners, with the advice of an attorney, determine that it is not practical to print the proposed amendment on the ballot and that a summary would not misrepresent the subject matter of the proposed amendment, the county commissioners shall include in their order a summary of the proposed amendment and instruction to the clerk to include the summary on the ballot instead of the text of the proposed amendment.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

#### SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 737, §§A2,C106 (NEW). PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW). PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 104, §§C8,10 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).

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