

ARTICLE XVI¹⁹⁵**THE REFERENDUM.**

SECTION 1. (a) The people reserve to themselves power known as The Referendum, by petition to have submitted to the registered voters of the State, to approve or reject at the polls, any Act, or part of any Act of the General Assembly, if approved by the Governor, or, if passed by the General Assembly over the veto of the Governor;

(b) The provisions of this Article shall be self-executing; provided that additional legislation in furtherance thereof and not in conflict therewith may be enacted.

SEC. 2.¹⁹⁶ No law enacted by the General Assembly shall take effect until the first day of June next after the session at which it may be passed, unless it contains a Section declaring such law an emergency law and necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety and is passed upon a ye and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members elected to each of the two Houses of the General Assembly. The effective date of a law other than an emergency law may be extended as provided in Section 3 (b) hereof. If before said first day of June there shall have been filed with the Secretary of the State a petition to refer to a vote of the people any law or part of a law capable of referendum, as in this Article provided, the same shall be referred by the Secretary of State to such vote, and shall not become a law or take effect until thirty days after its approval by a majority of the electors voting thereon at the next ensuing election held throughout the State for Members of the House of Representatives of the United States. An emergency law shall remain in force notwithstanding such petition, but shall stand repealed thirty days after having been rejected by a majority of the qualified electors voting thereon. No measure creating or abolishing any office, or changing the salary, term or duty of any franchise or special privilege, or creating any vested right or interest, shall be enacted as an emergency law. No law making any appropriation for maintaining the State Government, or for maintaining or aiding any public institution, not exceeding the next previous appropriation for the same purpose, shall be subject to rejection or repeal under this Section. The increase in any such appropriation for maintaining or aiding any public institution shall only take effect as in the case of other laws, and such increase or any part thereof specified in the petition, may be referred to a vote of the people upon petition.

SEC. 3.¹⁹⁷ (a) The referendum petition against an Act or part of an Act passed by the General Assembly, shall be sufficient if signed by three percent of the qualified voters of the State of Maryland, calculated upon the whole number of votes cast for Governor at the last preceding gubernatorial election, of whom not more

than half are residents of Baltimore City, or of any one County. However, any Public Local Law for any one County or the City of Baltimore, shall be referred by the Secretary of State only to the people of the County or City of Baltimore, upon a referendum petition of ten percent of the qualified voters of the County or City of Baltimore, as the case may be, calculated upon the whole number of votes cast respectively for Governor at the last preceding gubernatorial election.

(b) If more than one-third, but less than the full number of signatures required to complete any referendum petition against any law passed by the General Assembly, be filed with the Secretary of State before the first day of June, the time for the law to take effect and for filing the remainder of signatures to complete the petition shall be extended to the thirtieth day of the same month, with like effect.

If an Act is passed less than 45 days prior to June 1, it may not become effective sooner than 31 days after its passage. To bring this Act to referendum, the first one-third of the required number of signatures to a petition shall be submitted within 30 days after its passage. If the first one-third of the required number of signatures is submitted to the Secretary of State within 30 days after its passage, the time for the Act to take effect and for filing the remainder of the signatures to complete the petition shall be extended for an additional 30 days.

(c) In this Article, "pass" or "passed" means any final action upon any Act or part of an Act by both Houses of the General Assembly; and "enact" or "enacted" means approval of an Act or part of an Act by the Governor.

(d) Signatures on a petition for referendum on an Act or part of an Act may be signed at any time after the Act or part of an Act is passed.

SEC. 4.¹⁹⁸ A petition may consist of several papers, but each paper shall contain the full text, or an accurate summary approved by the Attorney General, of the Act or part of Act petitioned upon. There shall be attached to each paper of signatures filed with a petition an affidavit of the person procuring the signatures on such paper that of the person's best knowledge and belief every signature on it is genuine and bona fide, and that the signers are registered voters of the State of Maryland, and of the City of Baltimore, or County, as the case may be, as set opposite their names. The General Assembly shall prescribe by law the form of the petition for referendum, the manner for verifying the authenticity of petitions and other administrative procedures necessary and not in conflict with this Article.

SEC. 5. (a) The General Assembly shall provide for furnishing the voters of the State the text of all measures to be voted upon by the people; provided, that until otherwise provided by law the same shall be published in the manner prescribed by Article XIV of the Constitution for the publication of proposed Constitutional Amendments.

¹⁹⁵ Added by Chapter 673, Acts of 1914, ratified November 2, 1915.

¹⁹⁶ Thus amended by Chapter 681, Acts of 1977, ratified November 7, 1978.

¹⁹⁷ Thus amended by Chapter 548, Acts of 1976, ratified November 2, 1976.

¹⁹⁸ Thus amended by Chapter 548, Acts of 1976, ratified November 2, 1976.