

Assembly Constitutional Amendment No. 13

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 176

Assembly Constitutional Amendment No. 13—A resolution to propose to the people of the State of California an amendment to the Constitution of the State, by amending Section 10 of, and adding Section 10.5 to, Article II thereof, and adding Section 7.8 to Article XI thereof, relating to voting.

[Filed with Secretary of State November 2, 2023.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACA 13, Ward. Voting thresholds.

The California Constitution provides that a proposed constitutional amendment and a statewide initiative measure each take effect only if approved by a majority of the votes cast on the amendment or measure.

This measure would further provide that an initiative measure that includes one or more provisions that would amend the Constitution to increase the voter approval requirement to adopt any state or local measure would be approved by the voters only if the proportion of votes cast in favor of the initiative measure is equal to or greater than the highest voter approval requirement that the initiative measure would impose. The measure would specify that this voter approval requirement would apply to statewide initiative measures that appear on the ballot on or after January 1, 2024.

The California Constitution also permits initiative and referendum powers to be exercised by the voters of each city or county under procedures provided by the Legislature.

This measure would expressly authorize a local governing body to hold an advisory vote concerning any issue of governance for the purpose of allowing voters within the jurisdiction to voice their opinions on the issue. The measure would specify that an advisory question is approved only if a majority of the votes cast on the question are in favor.

This measure would further declare that its provisions are severable and that if any provision is held invalid, the other provisions of the act remain valid, as specified.

WHEREAS, In an era of special interests and others attempting to manipulate the electoral process, it is important to preserve the fundamental right of California citizens to approve statewide initiative statutes and referenda by a majority vote; and

WHEREAS, Initiative measures proposing to amend the Constitution to increase the vote requirement above a majority vote to pass other state and local measures violate the principle of majority rule; and

WHEREAS, Citizens have a substantial interest in voicing their opinions on issues of local governance and must be allowed to approve local advisory measures by majority vote; and

WHEREAS, The provisions of this measure are not intended to reverse or invalidate provisions of the Constitution in effect before January 1, 2024, including the provisions of Proposition 13 of 1978; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of this measure is to do all of the following:

(a) Retain the majority vote requirement to pass statewide initiative statutes and referenda;

(b) Provide that any proposed initiative measure that would amend the Constitution to increase the voter approval requirement to pass other state or local measures is effective only if the initiative is approved by the highest vote requirement it imposes on other measures;

(c) Constitutionally authorize local governments to submit questions to voters asking for their opinion on issues of governance; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That this measure shall be known, and may be cited, as the Protect and Retain the Majority Vote Act; and be it further

Resolved by the Assembly, the Senate concurring, That the Legislature of the State of California at its 2023–24 Regular Session, commencing on the fifth day of December 2022, two-thirds of the membership of each house concurring, hereby proposes to the people of the State of California that the Constitution of the State be amended as follows:

First—That Section 10 of Article II thereof is amended to read:

Sec. 10. (a) An initiative statute or referendum approved by the electors pursuant to Section 10.5 takes effect on the fifth day after the Secretary of State files the statement of the vote for the election at which the measure is voted on, but the measure may provide that it becomes operative after its effective date. If a referendum petition is filed against a part of a statute, the remainder of the statute shall not be delayed from going into effect.

(b) If provisions of two or more measures approved at the same election conflict, the provisions of the measure receiving the highest number of affirmative votes shall prevail.

(c) The Legislature may amend or repeal a referendum statute. The Legislature may amend or repeal an initiative statute by another statute that becomes effective only when approved by the electors unless the initiative statute permits amendment or repeal without the electors' approval.

(d) Before circulation of an initiative or referendum petition for signatures, a copy shall be submitted to the Attorney General who shall prepare a title and summary of the measure as provided by law.

(e) The Legislature shall provide for the manner in which a petition shall be circulated, presented, and certified, and the manner in which a measure shall be submitted to the electors.

Second—That Section 10.5 is added to Article II thereof, to read:

Sec. 10.5. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (b), a statewide initiative statute or referendum is approved if a majority of the votes cast on the measure are in favor.

(b) Notwithstanding Section 4 of Article XVIII or any other provision of the Constitution, an initiative measure that includes one or more provisions that amend the Constitution to increase the voter approval requirement to adopt any state or local measure is approved by the voters only if the proportion of votes cast in favor of the initiative measure is equal to or greater than the highest voter approval requirement that the initiative measure would impose for the adoption of any state or local measure.

(c) This section applies to all statewide initiative measures submitted to the electors on or after January 1, 2024, including measures that appear on the ballot at the same election at which the measure adding this section is approved by the electors.

Third—That Section 7.8 is added to Article XI thereof, to read:

Sec. 7.8. At any election, pursuant to procedures that the Legislature shall provide, a local governing body may hold an advisory vote concerning any issue of governance for the purpose of allowing voters within the jurisdiction to voice their opinions on the issue. An advisory question is approved only if a majority of the votes cast on the question are in favor. The results of the advisory vote shall in no manner be controlling on the sponsoring local governing body.

Fourth—The provisions of this measure are severable. If any portion, section, subdivision, paragraph, clause, sentence, phrase, word, or application of this measure is for any reason held to be invalid by a decision of any court of competent jurisdiction, that decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this measure. The people of the State of California hereby declare that they would have adopted this measure and each and every portion, section, subdivision, paragraph, clause, sentence, phrase, word, and application not declared invalid or unconstitutional without regard to whether any portion of this measure or application thereof would be subsequently declared invalid.