

# VOTER INFORMATION PAMPHLET (VIP) FAQS AND INFORMATION



## Q. WHAT IS THE VOTER INFORMATION PAMPHLET (VIP)?

A. The Secretary of State's office is required by law (13-27-401, MCA) to produce a voter information pamphlet containing information relevant to the election, including all statewide ballot issues (initiatives and referendums) that will appear on the ballot for the Federal General Election in November of every even-numbered year.

## Q. WHAT IS A PROPOSED BALLOT ISSUE OR BALLOT MEASURE?

A. A statewide ballot issue (13-27-110, MCA) is a proposed change to Montana law or the Montana Constitution. They can be proposed during the State Legislative Session (referendum) or submitted by citizens (initiative). If citizens submit a proposed ballot issue, an extensive review takes place to ensure the proposal is legally sufficient. Additionally, a minimum number of petition signatures must be gathered from qualified electors to qualify for the ballot. For an initiative, the number of qualified electors required in each legislative representative district and in the state is determined by the number of votes cast for the office of governor in the most recent gubernatorial election. Important information about drafting a statewide measure is found on the Secretary of State's Ballot Issues website.

## Q. WHAT INFORMATION IS INCLUDED IN THE VIP?

A. Information on all proposed statewide ballot issues, initiatives, and referendums qualified for the ballot is contained in the VIP, including arguments from the proponents and opponents advocating for and against each. The Secretary of State also includes general voter information in the VIP.

## Q. WHEN WILL THE VIP BE AVAILABLE?

A. After the general election ballots are certified in August of even-numbered years, the VIP will be prepared for publication and mailing in early October of the same year.

## Q. TO WHOM DOES THE VIP GET SENT?

A. The Secretary of State's office provides a list to each county to send one pamphlet to each voter in each county, except that two or more voters with the same mailing address and the same last name may be counted as one voter (13-27-410, MCA).

## Q. I DID NOT GET A VIP; CAN THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE SEND ME ONE?

A. Yes, after it is available, contact the Secretary of State's office or your county election office to have a VIP mailed to you. It will also be made available electronically at [votemt.gov](http://votemt.gov).

## Q. CAN I FIND CANDIDATE INFORMATION IN THE VIP TO HELP ME DECIDE WHO I WANT TO VOTE FOR?

A. No, the VIP only contains proposed statewide ballot issues.

## Q. WHERE CAN I FIND CANDIDATE INFORMATION SINCE THE VIP DOES NOT CONTAIN CANDIDATE INFORMATION?

A. Candidate contact information is available on the Secretary of State's Candidate Filing website.

## Q. WILL A VIP COPY BE AT THE POLLING PLACE WHEN I VOTE ON ELECTION DAY?

A. Montana law requires at least 10 copies to be available at each precinct (13-27-410, MCA).

## Q. I HAVE DIFFICULTY READING SMALL PRINT; CAN I GET A LARGE PRINT VIP?

A. A large print VIP will be available on our website at [votemt.gov](http://votemt.gov).

## Q. I AM BLIND; IS THERE A BRAILLE VERSION OF THE VIP?

A. Yes, copies of Braille VIPs are available upon request at the Secretary of State's office.

## Q. MY ELDERLY PARENTS HAVE DIFFICULTY READING; IS THERE AN AUDIO VERSION OF THE VIP?

A. Yes, an audio version of the VIP will be available at [votemt.gov](http://votemt.gov).

## Q. WHEN WILL THE ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THE VIP BE AVAILABLE ON THE SECRETARY OF STATE WEBSITE?

A. In early October, [votemt.gov](http://votemt.gov) will post an electronic version of the VIP and all accessible formats.

# COMMITTEES AND ARGUMENTS



**CHRISTI JACOBSEN**  
MONTANA SECRETARY OF STATE

## Specific Contents of the VIP For each ballot issue appearing on the ballot, the VIP contains:

- The statement of purpose and implication
- Fiscal statement, if applicable
- The “Yes” and “No” statements
- Complete text of the ballot issue
- Arguments for and against the issue and rebuttals
- Names of the members of the committees who draft the arguments and rebuttals.

## Appointment of Pro and Con Committees

Once a petition qualifies to appear on the ballot, committees are formed to write arguments for and against the issue to publish in the VIP. The size of the committees and who appoints them depends on the type of petition. Below are the most common ballot issues. For details, see [13-27-402](#) and [13-27-403, MCA](#).

1. Initiative petitions (constitutional initiatives (CI-XXX) and statutory initiatives (I-XXX)). The proponent who submitted the petition appoints a three-member committee supporting the issue. A five-member committee advocating rejection of the issue is appointed by the Governor, Attorney General, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives. The four appointed persons appoint the fifth member. If possible, members must be known to favor rejection of the issue.
2. Referendums from the Legislature (Legislative Referendum (LR-XXX)). A three-member committee supporting the issue is composed of one senator known to favor the measure appointed by the President of the Senate, one representative known to favor the measure appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one individual (who need not be a legislator) appointed by the first two members. The primary bill sponsor of the referendum is appointed to the committee as a legislative body member in which the bill originated. A three-member committee opposing the issue is appointed in the same manner. If possible, members should be known to favor rejection of the issue.
3. Referendums from the people (Initiative Referendum (IR-XXX)). The petition sponsor appoints a three-member committee in favor of repealing the bill. The opposition committee is composed of one senator appointed by the President of the Senate, one representative appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and one individual (who need not be a legislator) appointed by the first two members.

Ballot Measure Type	Pro Committee Members (For IR, in favor of repealing the referred bill)	Con Committee Members
Constitutional Initiative (CI)	1. Person appointed by the sponsor 2. Person appointed by the sponsor 3. Person appointed by the sponsor	1. Person appointed by the Senate President 2. Person appointed by the Speaker 3. Person appointed by the Governor 4. Person appointed by the Attorney General 5. Person appointed by the other four appointees
Statutory Initiative (I)	1. Person appointed by the sponsor 2. Person appointed by the sponsor 3. Person appointed by the sponsor	1. Person appointed by the Senate President 2. Person appointed by the Speaker 3. Person appointed by the Governor 4. Person appointed by the Attorney General 5. Person appointed by the other four appointees
Initiative Referendum (IR)	1. Person appointed by the sponsor 2. Person appointed by the sponsor 3. Person appointed by the sponsor	1. Senator appointed by the Senate President 2. Representative appointed by the Speaker 3. Person appointed by the other two appointees
Legislative Referendum (LR)	1. Senator appointed by the Senate President* 2. Representative appointed by the Speaker* 3. Person appointed by the other two appointees (*Primary bill sponsor from the originating body)	1. Senator appointed by the Senate President 2. Representative appointed by the Speaker 3. Person appointed by the other two appointees
Constitutional Amendment (C) (by Legislature)	1. Senator appointed by the Senate President* 2. Representative appointed by the Speaker* 3. Person appointed by the other two appointees (*Primary bill sponsor from the originating body)	1. Senator appointed by the Senate President 2. Representative appointed by the Speaker 3. Person appointed by the other two appointees

## Drafting of the Arguments

The original arguments for or against an issue are no longer than 500 words ([44.3.1303 ARM](#)). The argument must consist solely of written material prepared by the committee and may not consist of pictures, clippings, or other material. The written material must be prepared in a uniform typeface required by the Secretary of State. It must be filed with the Secretary of State no later than 105 days before the election at which the people will vote on the issue.

Copies of these arguments are provided to each ballot issue committee, each of which may prepare a rebuttal argument which is subject to the same requirements as for arguments, except that the rebuttal is no longer than 250 words and must be filed with the Secretary of State no later than 10 days after the deadline for filing the original arguments.

Proponents and opponents of ballot issues who make factual statements in their arguments and/or rebuttals must provide supporting documents within two business days of the deadline for submitting the arguments or rebuttals, as applicable.

Arguments and rebuttals may be rejected if the Secretary of State, with the approval of the Attorney General, holds that the arguments contain obscene, vulgar, profane, scandalous, libelous, or defamatory matter or if the language incites, counsels, promotes, or advocates hatred, abuse, violence, or hostility toward or tends to cast shame or ridicule upon any group of persons because of race, color, religion, sex, or is otherwise prohibited by law to be sent through the mail [13-27-408, MCA](#).

*Please note: The information provided in this publication is for general informational purposes and is intended to be used solely as a guide for answering frequently asked questions pertaining to the Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP). Please consult the current and applicable provisions of the Montana Code Annotated (MCA) to ensure compliance with applicable laws.*

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