

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 39

Proposed Constitutional Amendment

Official Ballot Title:*

PUBLICATION LAWS AUTHORIZING STATE DEBT

Shall Article VIII, section 3 of the state constitution, requiring the publication, in a newspaper in each county for three months prior to the election, of the text of any law to be voted upon by the people authorizing state debts, be amended so as to require only that notice of the law be published at least four times during the four weeks preceding the election in every legal newspaper in the state?

Vote cast by members of the 1965 Legislature on final passage:
SENATE: (49 members) Yeas, 45; Nays, 0; Absent or not voting, 4.
HOUSE: (99 members) Yeas, 93; Nays, 1; Absent or not voting, 5.

*Ballot Title as issued by the Attorney General.

Statement **FOR**

“Let the people vote” or “let the people decide” is a very splendid phrase, if the people know what they are voting on and what they are deciding.

The purpose of HJR No. 39 is to give the voting public a better understanding of Referendum Bills at less cost.

Publication of the full text in legalistic language does not provide the clearest possible understanding of the purpose of such a ballot measure. Publication of the measure in just one newspaper in each county does not afford the broadest possible coverage. Furthermore, publication for three months before the election is unnecessarily long, adding nothing to either the understanding nor the coverage.

HJR No. 39 corrects all these defects:

Almost all daily and weekly newspapers in the state are “legal newspapers.” Almost every voter reads some legal newspaper each week. An explanation of ballot issues, appearing once a week for four weeks in each legal newspaper would provide the opportunity for the broadest possible understanding—when it is needed—just prior to the election. And, at a cost-saving to the state.

In the 1964 election \$150,429.96 was spent for the publication of Referendum Bills 11, 12 and 13. If explanatory notices had been published instead, as provided by HJR No. 39, the expenditure would have been \$63,806.40. The saving in state funds would have amounted to \$86,623.56.

HJR No. 39 proposes nothing that is untried:

This change in publication requirements for Referendum Bills is the same as that which the voters approved for the publication of Constitutional Amendments in the 1962 election.

The principle of a democracy is that a majority of the people will choose correctly when informed. They cannot choose correctly, if uninformed.

It is clear then, that if notice is worthwhile, then a law which gives greater publicity to more of the electorate, is good.

*Committee appointed to compose statement **FOR** House Joint Resolution 39:*

PERRY B. WOODALL, State Senator; ALAN THOMPSON, State Representative; W. G. BOYKIN, Secretary-Manager, Allied Daily Newspapers; JERRY ZUBROD, Manager, Washington Newspaper Publishers' Association, Inc.

*Explanatory comment issued by the
Attorney General as required by law*

The Law as it now exists:

Article VIII, section 3 of the state constitution presently requires the full text of any law to be voted upon by the people authorizing the contracting of state debts to be published in at least one newspaper in each county where a newspaper is published for three months immediately prior to the election at which the law is to be voted upon.

**Effect of House Joint Resolution
No. 39 if approved into Law:**

This proposal would substitute for the above publication procedure a requirement that notice of submission to the people of a law authorizing the contracting of state debts be published in every legal newspaper in the state at least four times during the four weeks immediately preceding the election at which the law is to be voted upon.

*Note: Complete text of House Joint Resolution No. 39
appears on Page 44.*

Statement **AGAINST**

This proposed constitutional amendment was passed by the Extraordinary Session of the 1965 Legislature with only one dissenting vote. Further, no member of the Legislature could be enlisted to write a statement against the proposal for publication in this pamphlet.

A. LUDLOW KRAMER, *Secretary of State*

ceding the election in every legal newspaper in the state.

Passed the House May 6, 1965.

Robert M. Schaefer,
Speaker of the House.

Passed the Senate May 7, 1965.

JOHN A. CHERBERG,
President of the Senate.

EXPLANATORY COMMENT H.J.R. NO. 7:

All words underscored do not appear in the Constitution as it is now written but will be put in if this amendment is adopted.

A. LUDLOW KRAMER, Secretary of State.

COMPLETE TEXT OF

**Proposed
Constitutional Amendment**

**HOUSE JOINT
RESOLUTION 39**

~~preceding the election at which it is submitted to the people~~) at least four times during the four weeks next preceding the election in every legal newspaper in the state: PROVIDED, that failure of any newspaper to publish this notice shall not be interpreted as affecting the outcome of the election.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause notice of the foregoing constitutional amendment to be published at least four times during the four weeks next preceding the election in every legal newspaper in the state.

Passed the House March 22, 1965

Robert M. Schaefer,
Speaker of the House.

Passed the Senate April 13, 1965.

JOHN A. CHERBERG,
President of the Senate.

EXPLANATORY COMMENT H.J.R. NO. 39:

All words enclosed in double parentheses and lined through are in our State Constitution at the present and are being taken out by this amendment. All words underscored do not appear in the State Constitution as it is now written but will be put in if this amendment is adopted.

A. LUDLOW KRAMER, Secretary of State.

Ballot Title as issued by the Attorney General:

**PUBLICATION—LAWS AUTHORIZING
STATE DEBT**

Shall Article VIII, section 3 of the state constitution, requiring the publication, in a newspaper in each county for three months prior to the election, of the text of any law to be voted upon by the people authorizing state debts, be amended so as to require only that notice of the law be published at least four times during the four weeks preceding the election in every legal newspaper in the state?

BE IT RESOLVED, *By the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington, in Legislative Session Assembled:*

THAT, At the general election to be held in this state on Tuesday next succeeding the first Monday in November 1966, there shall be submitted to the qualified voters of the state for their approval and ratification, or rejection, a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the State of Washington, by amending Article VIII, section 3 to read as follows:

Article VIII, section 3. Except the debt specified in sections one and two of this article, no debts shall hereafter be contracted by, or on behalf of this state, unless such debt shall be authorized by law for some single work or object to be distinctly specified therein, which law shall provide ways and means, exclusive of loans, for the payment of the interest on such debt as it falls due, and also to pay and discharge the principal of such debt within twenty years from the time of the contracting thereof. No such law shall take effect until it shall, at a general election, have been submitted to the people and have received a majority of all the votes cast for and against it at such election, and all moneys raised by authority of such law shall be applied only to the specific object therein stated, or to the payment of the debt thereby created, (~~and such law~~) and notice that such law will be submitted to the people shall be published (~~in at least one newspaper in each county, if one be published therein, throughout the state, for three months next~~