



General Assembly

January Session, 2025

***Substitute Bill No. 7125***



***AN ACT CONCERNING REFERENDA ON REVISIONS TO MUNICIPAL CHARTERS AND HOME RULE ORDINANCES.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1       Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) (a) Whenever by law it is  
2       provided that a proposed charter amendment or home rule ordinance  
3       amendment may be submitted to a vote of the electors of a municipality  
4       pursuant to section 7-191 of the general statutes, as amended by this act,  
5       or to any special act, charter or ordinance, the provisions of this section  
6       shall apply in addition to all other applicable provisions of chapter 152  
7       of the general statutes.

8       (b) (1) The designation of a proposed charter amendment or home  
9       rule ordinance amendment on the ballot, or of each item within such  
10      amendment that is separately presented on the ballot in accordance with  
11      the provisions of subdivision (2) of this subsection, shall be "Shall (here  
12      insert the question, in a form requiring a "Yes" or "No" response,  
13      followed by a question mark)" and, unless such question as presented  
14      adequately explains the proposed change or changes, shall include a  
15      precise and fair explanation of such proposed change or changes that  
16      shall not advocate either the approval or disapproval of such  
17      amendment. Such question and any such explanation shall be presented  
18      on the ballot using simple, precise, clear, unambiguous and plain  
19      language.

20 (2) Whenever a proposed charter amendment or home rule ordinance  
21 amendment contains any of the following items, each such item shall be  
22 separately presented on the ballot so as to be approved or disapproved,  
23 as the case may be, individually by the electors of the municipality:

24 (A) Any change in the manner by which the legislative or governing  
25 body of the municipality is elected;

26 (B) Any change in whether officials of the municipality are elected or  
27 appointed, or in the terms of office of such officials, with specific  
28 reference to each office affected by any such change, except that the  
29 same such change being proposed across multiple offices may be  
30 presented as a single item;

31 (C) Any change that imposes, repeals or alters a residency  
32 requirement for the head of any municipal department, with specific  
33 reference to each position affected by any such change, except that the  
34 same such change being proposed across multiple positions may be  
35 presented as a single item;

36 (D) The creation or elimination of any municipal board or  
37 commission, with specific reference to each such board or commission,  
38 and a description of the scope of authority for any such board or  
39 commission being so created; and

40 (E) Any change regarding the provision of public notice for public  
41 hearings that relate to the municipal budget process.

42 (c) Any municipality may provide for the preparation, printing and  
43 dissemination of concise summaries of arguments in favor of, and  
44 arguments opposed to, a proposed charter amendment or home rule  
45 ordinance amendment, which summaries shall otherwise comply with  
46 the provisions of subsection (c) of section 9-369b of the general statutes,  
47 as amended by this act.

48 Sec. 2. Subsection (f) of section 7-191 of the general statutes is repealed  
49 and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

50 (f) The proposed charter, charter amendments or home rule  
51 ordinance amendments shall be prepared for the ballot by the  
52 appointing authority and may be submitted in the form of one or several  
53 questions in accordance with the provisions of section 1 of this act; and,  
54 if approved by a majority of the electors of the municipality voting  
55 thereon at a regular election or if approved by a majority which number  
56 equals at least fifteen per cent of the electors of the municipality as  
57 determined by the last-completed active registry list of such  
58 municipality at a special election, such proposed charter, charter  
59 amendments or home rule ordinance amendments shall become  
60 effective thirty days after such approval unless an effective date or dates  
61 are specified therein, in which event the date or dates specified shall  
62 prevail. For the purposes of any complaint brought under section 9-371b  
63 by any person claiming to have been aggrieved by any ruling of any  
64 election official in connection with a referendum held on a charter  
65 amendment or home rule ordinance amendment, "election official"  
66 includes the appointing authority preparing such amendment for the  
67 ballot pursuant to this subsection and "ruling" includes such  
68 preparation.

69 Sec. 3. Section 9-369 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
70 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

71 Whenever at any regular or special state or municipal election any  
72 vote for approval or disapproval of any constitutional amendment or  
73 any question or proposal is taken pursuant to the Constitution, the  
74 general statutes or any special act, unless otherwise provided, such  
75 election shall be warned and held, the vote on such amendment,  
76 question or proposal cast and canvassed and the result determined and  
77 certified as nearly as may be in accordance with the provisions  
78 governing the election of officers in the state or in such municipality.  
79 The warning for such election shall state that a purpose of such election  
80 is to vote for the approval or disapproval of such amendment, question  
81 or proposal and shall state the section of the Constitution or of the  
82 general statutes or the special act under authority of which such vote is  
83 taken. The vote on such amendment, question or proposal shall be taken

84 by a "Yes" and "No" vote on the voting tabulator. [, and the] Except as  
 85 provided in section 1 of this act for a proposed charter amendment or  
 86 home rule ordinance amendment, the designation of such constitutional  
 87 amendment, or of such question or proposal, on the ballot shall be "Shall  
 88 (here insert the question or proposal, followed by a question mark)".  
 89 Such ballot shall be provided for use in accordance with the provisions  
 90 of section 9-250. The municipal clerk shall number on the ballot the  
 91 questions to be voted upon according to the order in which they will  
 92 appear thereon, provided amendments to the Constitution shall be  
 93 numbered by the Secretary of the State in numerical order based upon  
 94 the dates on which resolutions proposing such amendments were  
 95 passed, precedence being given to the earliest passed unless otherwise  
 96 provided by the resolutions proposing such amendments. Each elector  
 97 shall vote "Yes" if in favor of the amendment, question or proposal or  
 98 "No" if not in favor thereof. If, upon the official determination of the  
 99 result of such vote, it appears that a majority of all the votes so cast are  
 100 in approval of such amendment, question or proposal, such  
 101 amendment, question or proposal shall, unless otherwise provided, take  
 102 effect forthwith.

103 Sec. 4. Subsection (b) of section 9-369a of the general statutes is  
 104 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
 105 *2025*):

106 (b) When the clerk of the municipality determines that the necessary  
 107 action has been taken for submission of the question, [he] the clerk shall,  
 108 at least forty-five days prior to the election, file in the office of the  
 109 Secretary of the State a statement setting forth the designation of the  
 110 question as it is to appear on the ballot at the election, the date upon  
 111 which the submitting action was taken and the reference to the law  
 112 under which the action was taken. [Such] Except for a proposed charter  
 113 amendment or home rule ordinance amendment under section 1 of this  
 114 act, such designation shall be in the form of a question [,] as provided in  
 115 section 9-369, as amended by this act. Whenever it is specifically  
 116 provided in the general statutes that any such question may be  
 117 approved for such submission within the period of forty-five days prior

118 to such an election, and action is taken to submit a question within such  
 119 period, the clerk of the municipality shall file the statement required by  
 120 this subsection with the Secretary of the State immediately upon the  
 121 taking of such action.

122 Sec. 5. Subsection (c) of section 9-369b of the general statutes is  
 123 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*  
 124 *2025*):

125 (c) [Any] Except for a proposed charter amendment or home rule  
 126 ordinance amendment under section 1 of this act, any municipality may  
 127 provide, by ordinance, for the preparation, printing and dissemination  
 128 of concise summaries of arguments in favor of, and arguments opposed  
 129 to, local proposals or questions approved for submission to the electors  
 130 of a municipality at a referendum for which explanatory texts are  
 131 prepared under subsection (a) of this section. Any such ordinance shall  
 132 provide for the establishment or designation of a committee to prepare  
 133 such summaries, in accordance with procedures set forth in said  
 134 ordinance. The members of said committee shall be representatives of  
 135 various viewpoints concerning such local proposals or questions. The  
 136 committee shall provide an opportunity for public comment on such  
 137 summaries to the extent practicable. Such summaries shall be approved  
 138 by vote of the legislative body of the municipality, or any other  
 139 municipal body designated by the ordinance, and shall be posted and  
 140 distributed in the same manner as explanatory texts under subsection  
 141 (a) of this section. Each summary shall contain language clearly stating  
 142 that the printing of the summary does not constitute an endorsement by  
 143 or represent the official position of the municipality.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	7-191(f)
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	9-369
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	9-369a(b)
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	9-369b(c)

***Statement of Legislative Commissioners:***

In Section 4(b), the second sentence was rewritten for consistency with standard drafting conventions; and in Section 5(c), the first sentence was rewritten for consistency with standard drafting conventions.

**GAE**      *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*