

**SFA**

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Fiscal Agency

• Lansing, Michigan 48909

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Senate Bill 609 (as reported with amendments)  
Sponsor: Senator Gilbert J. DiNello  
Committee: Local Government and Veterans

Date Completed: 2-20-90

**RATIONALE**

The Michigan Election Law prescribes the form and content of petitions of initiative or referendum, nomination, or recall. Among these provisions is the requirement that petitions contain the signatures of persons circulating the petitions and of persons signing the petitions. These signatures then are used to verify that the person who signed the petition is, indeed, a qualified elector. There have been instances when signatures were illegible and persons attempting to determine whether the signers were registered electors have not been able to do so because the signatures were difficult to read. Some people believe that in order to facilitate the verification process, petitions should contain a space where the signer could print his or her name.

**CONTENT**

The bill would amend the Michigan Election Law to require that petitions of initiative or referendum, nomination, or recall be in a form that provided spaces for each elector who signed the petition and the circulator to print their names. The Secretary of State would be required to prescribe the location of the space for the printed names. Failure of an elector who signed a petition or circulator to print his or her name, or to print his or her name in the location prescribed by the Secretary of State, would not affect the validity of the signature of the elector or circulator. A printed name located in the space prescribed for printed names would not constitute the signature of the elector or circulator.

Currently, the law permits a person to print his or her own recall petitions as long as those petitions comply substantially with the form prescribed by the Secretary of State. Under the bill, a person also would have to comply with the provisions requiring the printed signatures of the electors who signed the petition and the circulator.

The bill would take effect January 1, 1991.

MCL 168.482 et al.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

**ARGUMENTS****Supporting Argument**

By requiring that there be space provided so a person could print, as well as sign, his or her name on a petition, the bill would provide a tool to aid persons who must verify these signatures with voter registration files.

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

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