

SENATE No. 19

To accompany the petition of Albert T. Rhodes relative to the validity of signatures on initiative and referendum petitions. Election Laws.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty-Four.

AN ACT

Relative to Fraudulent or Invalid Signatures appended to or supporting Initiative and Referendum Petitions.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter fifty-three of the General
2 Laws is hereby amended by inserting after section
3 twenty-two, and under the caption INITIATIVE AND
4 REFERENDUM, the following new section:—
5 *Section 22A.* At any time after the filing of an
6 initiative or referendum petition, and not less than
7 days prior to the state election when
8 the measure therein proposed is to be submitted to
9 the voters, objections that the signatures appear-
10 ing thereon have been forged or placed thereon by
11 fraud, or for money or other valuable considera-
12 tion, or that the petition has not been signed or

13 supported by a sufficient number of qualified voters,
14 may be filed with the state secretary. If, upon
15 hearing or otherwise, it appears to the state secre-
16 tary that there is substantial evidence supporting
17 such objections, he shall refer the same to the state
18 ballot law commission, which shall investigate the
19 same, and for such purpose may exercise all the
20 powers conferred upon it relative to objections to
21 nominations for state officers. The commission
22 shall report its findings to the state secretary, and if
23 it shall appear to the secretary that the objections
24 have been sustained and that such a petition is
25 not signed or supported by a sufficient number of
26 signatures, he shall forthwith dismiss the same.

1 SECTION 2. This act shall apply to all initiative
2 and referendum petitions pending at the time of
3 its passage.

