



Liz Keating
Councilmember

MOTION

WE MOVE for the Law Department to begin drafting an ordinance updating the City Charter with provisions on ballot initiatives to allow for more public transparency and longer timeframes for the Law Department to prepare ballot initiatives for a Council vote.

WE FURTHER MOVE the Law Department makes the appropriate changes to the Charter to require a petitioner to file final ballot measure language with the Clerk of Council prior to collecting any signatures. This should follow the mold set by the City of Columbus: a clear title to the ordinance along with a singular subject matter. This should be paired with fixing the ambiguous language within the City Charter regarding candidate petitions and their affidavits.



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COMMITTEES

Member: Budget & Finance • Equitable Growth & Housing • Public Safety & Governance

STATEMENT

In the State of Ohio, it is required to publicly file final ballot language before a petitioner can begin collecting signatures for the petition. However, there is no such requirement for local ballot measures, including in the City of Cincinnati. To promote public transparency, the City Charter should be amended to require a public filing of the ballot initiative with the Clerk of Council, similar to Ohio state law and the Charter of the City of Columbus.

The added layer of transparency will allow voters to be properly informed as to the language of the petitions being circulated. Updating requirements to reflect a singular subject matter and a clear title will make these referendums apparent and straightforward for the public.

Additionally, publicly filing the ballot language at the beginning of the process will allow the Law Department more time to prepare the ordinance for City Council. Currently, the Law Department has only ten days to turn around a Charter Amendment for Council vote when the petition is approved by the Hamilton County Board of Elections. The Law Department staff should be provided a sufficient amount of time to prepare Charter Amendment Language for Cincinnati City Council, particularly when there are multiple Charter Amendment initiatives for one election.