

Pennsylvania Constitutional Amendment Process



Unlike other bills, proposed constitutional amendments bypass the Governor. They must pass in two consecutive legislative sessions in order to appear on the ballot for voters to approve or reject.

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FIRST INTRODUCTION

A Joint Resolution proposing one or more amendments to the Pennsylvania Constitution is introduced for consideration.

FIRST PASSAGE

The General Assembly passes the resolution by a simple majority vote in the House and Senate. Amendment language may change as it moves through the process.

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FIRST PUBLICATION

The Secretary of State submits the proposed amendment (and votes taken) for publication in two newspapers in every county. Publication must start **three months before** the next general election.

GENERAL ELECTION

The general election occurs and a new session of the General Assembly begins.

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SECOND INTRODUCTION

In the next **consecutive** legislative session, a new joint resolution is introduced proposing the same constitutional amendment. Amendment language must be **identical** to language passed last session.

SECOND PASSAGE

The resolution passes a second time by a simple majority vote in the House and Senate. At no point during the process can the amendment language be changed.

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VOTE IS SCHEDULED

The Legislature determines when the public will vote on the amendment. The amendment can be scheduled to appear on a primary or general election ballot occurring at least **three months after** the amendment passed the General Assembly.

SECOND PUBLICATION

The Secretary of State publishes the proposed amendment for a second time in two newspapers in every county. Publication must begin at least **three months before** the proposed amendment is scheduled to appear on the ballot.

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BALLOT IS PREPARED

The Secretary of State drafts a short summary of the amendment to appear on the ballot. The office of the Attorney General writes a plain English description of what the proposed amendment would do if adopted.

ELECTION DAY

If a majority of Pennsylvania voters approve the proposed amendment, it is codified into the Pennsylvania Constitution.

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