



104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

HB4613

Introduced 2/3/2026, by Rep. Maurice A. West, II

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

10 ILCS 5/16-7

from Ch. 46, par. 16-7

10 ILCS 5/28-14 new

Amends the Election Code. Provides that every ballot measure to be placed on a ballot shall be written in plain language and include a ballot measure summary that describes the primary purpose of the ballot measure and the material legal effect if the ballot measure is approved or rejected. Sets forth provisions concerning the preparation of ballot measures and ballot measure summaries. Provides that a registered voter may challenge a ballot measure or ballot measure summary for non-compliance with the provision. Makes conforming changes.

LRB104 17988 SPS 31425 b

1 AN ACT concerning elections.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Election Code is amended by changing
5 Section 16-7 and by adding Section 28-14 as follows:

6 (10 ILCS 5/16-7) (from Ch. 46, par. 16-7)

7 Sec. 16-7. Whenever a public question is to be submitted
8 to be voted upon and has been initiated and certified in
9 accordance with Article 28 of this Code, the election
10 authorities to whom the question is certified shall print the
11 question on the ballot for the proper election in accordance
12 with Section 28-14, and shall cause it to be submitted in the
13 proper precincts to those electors entitled by reason of their
14 residency to vote on such question.

15 The substance of such public measure shall be clearly
16 indicated on a separate ballot, and two spaces shall be left
17 upon the right-hand margin thereof, one for the votes favoring
18 the public measure, to be designated by the word, "Yes", and
19 one for the votes opposing the measure, to be designated by the
20 word, "No", as in the form herein given:

21 -----
22 Shall (here print YES
23 the substance of the -----

1 public measure). NO

2 -----

3 The elector shall designate his vote by a cross mark,
4 thus: (X). Any such separate ballot shall be printed on paper
5 of sufficient size so that when folded once it shall be large
6 enough to contain the following words, which shall be printed
7 on the back, "Ballot for (name of public measure to be voted
8 on)." Such ballot shall be handed to the elector at the same
9 time as the ballot containing the names of the candidates, and
10 returned therewith by the elector to the proper office in the
11 manner designated by this Act. All provisions of this Act
12 relating to ballots shall apply to such separate ballot,
13 except as herein otherwise provided. Such separate ballot or
14 ballots shall be printed upon paper of a distinctly different
15 color from any other ballot for candidates used at such
16 election and from those for the question of retention in
17 office of judges and of constitutional amendments and as near
18 as may be practicable, be of uniform size. Any variation in the
19 size of such ballots shall not impair their validity.

20 In the case of a public question described in subsection
21 (b) of Section 28-6, the election authority shall include on
22 the ballot the description of the territory concerning which
23 the question is to be submitted, as set forth in the
24 certification of the public question or, where the question is
25 initiated by petition filed with the authority, as set forth
26 in such petition. If the election authority determines the

1 description cannot be included within the space limitations of
2 the ballot, the election authority shall prepare large printed
3 copies of a notice of the public question, which shall include
4 the description. The notice shall be prominently displayed in
5 the polling place of each precinct in which the question is to
6 be submitted.

7 In precincts in which voting machines are used, separate
8 ballots shall not be required if such voting machines permit
9 the casting of votes on such proposition.

10 An electronic voting system authorized by Article 24A may
11 be used in voting and tabulating the ballots on a public
12 measure. When an electronic voting system is used, which
13 utilizes a ballot label booklet and ballot card, there shall
14 be used in the ballot label booklet a separate ballot label
15 page or pages as required for such public measures or
16 propositions. The page or pages for such public measures or
17 propositions shall be of a color separate and distinct from
18 the ballot label page or pages used for candidates and from
19 those used for the propositions of retention in office of
20 judges and of constitutional amendments. The ballot card
21 provided for recording the voter's vote or choice on public
22 measures or propositions may be the same card as is used for
23 recording his vote for candidates. More than one public
24 measure or proposition may be placed on the same ballot label
25 page or series of pages and may be voted or recorded on the
26 same column or series of columns on the same ballot card, and

1 all columns on the ballot card may be of the same color.

2 However, at the nonpartisan, consolidated primary, and
3 consolidated elections, the proposition for a public question
4 relating to a political subdivision shall be placed on the
5 ballot together with the ballot for the nomination or election
6 of officers of such political subdivision to be voted upon at
7 the same election, unless such placement is not feasible.

8 (Source: P.A. 84-1467.)

9 (10 ILCS 5/28-14 new)

10 Sec. 28-14. Plain language and readability standards.

11 (a) As used in this Section:

12 "Ballot measure" means any public question, constitutional
13 amendment, referendum, or other proposition submitted to
14 voters under this Article.

15 "Plain language" means wording that is clear, concise,
16 logically organized, and written so that the intended audience
17 can understand it without specialized legal knowledge. "Plain
18 language" does not include wording that:

19 (1) contains more than one passive sentence;

20 (2) uses unnecessary semicolons rather than separate
21 sentences; or

22 (3) contains double negatives.

23 "Readability standard" means an objective measure of text
24 complexity, as determined by the Flesch-Kincaid readability
25 test.

1 (b) Every ballot measure to be placed on a ballot shall be
2 written in plain language and shall include a ballot measure
3 summary that describes the primary purpose of the ballot
4 measure and the material legal effect if the ballot measure is
5 approved or rejected.

6 (c) A ballot measure summary required under subsection (b)
7 shall:

8 (1) be neutral, non-argumentative, and avoid the
9 unnecessary use of legal terms;

10 (2) state the effect of a "Yes" vote and of a "No"
11 vote;

12 (3) be written to have a Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level
13 score no higher than the eighth grade; and

14 (4) be no longer than 75 words for statewide ballot
15 measures or 50 words for local ballot measures.

16 (d) The State Board of Elections, in consultation with the
17 Attorney General, shall prepare and review statewide ballot
18 measures and ballot measure summaries for compliance with this
19 Section before certification. A local election authority shall
20 prepare and review local ballot measures and ballot measure
21 summaries for compliance with this Section before
22 certification.

23 (e) A registered voter may challenge a ballot measure or
24 ballot measure summary for non-compliance with this Section.
25 If a court finds that a ballot measure or a ballot measure
26 summary does not comply, it may order that the State Board of

1 Elections or local election authority make revisions necessary
2 to satisfy the requirements of this Section.