



STATE OF MICHIGAN
RUTH JOHNSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

August 14, 2014

**DEADLINE ESTABLISHED FOR SUBMISSIONS
REGARDING BALLOT LANGUAGE
STATEWIDE BALLOT PROPOSALS
NOVEMBER 4, 2014 GENERAL ELECTION**

Under Michigan election law, the Director of Elections is charged with drafting ballot language for most types of statewide ballot proposals and the Board of State Canvassers is charged with reviewing and approving the language. “The statement shall consist of a true and impartial statement of the purpose of the amendment or question in such language as shall create no prejudice for or against the proposed amendment or question.” MCL 168.32; see also MI Const art 12, §2 (“The ballot to be used in such election shall contain a statement of the purpose of the proposed amendment, expressed in not more than 100 words, exclusive of caption. Such statement of purpose and caption shall be prepared by the person authorized by law, and shall consist of a true and impartial statement of the purpose of the amendment in such language as shall create no prejudice for or against the proposed amendment.”)

Prior to drafting, the Bureau of Elections solicits suggested language and explanatory material from the proponents, opponents, and other parties interested in the proposal. This material has proven helpful in developing impartial ballot language. The calendar for the solicitation of suggested language and the public release of the recommended language follows:

Deadline for submission of suggested language and materials to staff: August 22.

Tentative meeting date: Week of Sept. 2.

The ballot wording has two components. The first is the 100 words referenced in the State Constitution and the statute; the second is the caption which does not have a specific word limit. Both the 100 word description and the caption are held to the same impartiality standard. Michigan election law directs that ballot proposals must be constructed so that a “Yes” vote is in *favor* of the subject matter of the proposal and a “No” vote is *against* the subject matter of the proposal. MCL 168.485, 643a.