

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Courts



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Representative William K. Williams

## Sponsor Statement for HB 213/HJR 25 Initiative Petitions

**“An act relating to initiative and referendum petition; and providing for an effective date.”**

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House Bill 213/House Joint Resolution 25 (“[HB 213/HJR 25](#)”) were introduced to ensure statewide consideration and discussion of an [initiative petition](#). The legislation requires a minimum amount of broad geographic support for submission of an initiative petition to the people of the State of Alaska. HB 213/HJR 25 would change existing law and require the following before an initiative petition can be submitted to the people.

- The initiative sponsor to gather signatures from at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the house districts of the State of Alaska as opposed to  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the house districts; and
- The number of signatures in each house district would have to equal at least seven percent of the number of voters in that house district who voted in the last general election.

In past elections the greatest support for initiatives has come from one general area of the State, the Anchorage/Mat-Su region. Alaska’s population distribution is much different now than it was when our Constitution was approved. Today, initiative supporters could, in theory, collect a large majority of the total signatures needed in a limited area such as Anchorage and only one or two signatures in other house districts and succeed in getting an issue on the ballot as an initiative.

As we write laws in the Capitol many perspectives are taken into account as issues are discussed through the committee process and public hearings are held. During this process, healthy debate, from representatives and citizens from all over the state is conducted. Pertinent questions are asked and legislation is constantly amended to take into account those concerns.

HB 213/HJR 25 is an attempt to mandate fairness and open debate in the initiative process for all citizens in the State of Alaska.