

August 17, 2012

To the Honorable Members of the House of Representatives
97th General Assembly

Today I return House Bill 5207 with specific recommendations for change. The underlying bill amends the Election Code by removing constitutional amendments from provisions regarding the methodology used to validate petition signatures. My recommendations for change do not alter this language. The changes do, however, establish a mechanism - through petition initiative and binding referendum - to enact ordinances that assist the veterans of our Armed Forces in such ways as employment, job training, health care, and other services and benefits. Access to these resources is among the most critical needs of the Illinois veterans' community.

By putting the power of petition and referenda in the hands of citizens at the local level, we give each local unit of government a new instrument through which residents can honor those who fought to defend precisely these expressions of democracy and freedom.

As an elected official, I understand how grateful constituents are for the service and sacrifice of the men and women in the Armed Forces. This measure provides citizens with a means of expressing their support at the local level and will have a direct impact on Illinois' past, present and future heroes in uniform.

Therefore, pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(e) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return House Bill 5207, entitled "AN ACT concerning elections.", with the following specific recommendations for change:

on page 1, line 5, after "28-12", by inserting "and by adding Article 28A"; and

on page 3, after line 6, by inserting the following:

" (10 ILCS 5/Art. 28A heading new)

ARTICLE 28A. REFERENDUM FOR HELPING VETERANS

(10 ILCS 5/28A-1 new)

Sec. 28A-1. Local government initiative petition and referendum for helping veterans.

(a) In order to promote the welfare of veterans of our nation's armed forces, the electors of any unit of local government may pass, by initiative petition and referendum in the manner prescribed by this Article, a binding ordinance relating to the subjects set forth in subsection (b) that the corporate authorities of their unit of local government are empowered to pass.

(b) A binding ordinance relating to helping veterans of any branch of service in the armed forces of the United States may be proposed by a petition signed by the number of electors equal to at least 8% of the total votes cast for Governor at the last general election in the unit of local government. The petition shall contain the text of the proposed ordinance and the date of the regular or unit of local government election at which the proposed ordinance is to be submitted, shall have been signed by petitioning electors not more than 12 months preceding the regular or unit of local government election, and shall be filed with the clerk of the unit of local government at least 92 days before that regular or

unit of local government election. Ordinances that may be proposed pursuant to this subsection (b) include, but are not limited to, measures that provide job training opportunities for veterans or veterans' employment or other measures that enable veterans to access health services, or other services and benefits. Any ordinance proposed pursuant to this subsection (b) that will require the imposition of a tax or fee of any kind, or the expenditure of any public funds, shall specify, in the text of the referendum question, the amount of any such tax, fee, or expenditure, on an annual basis.

(c) If the corporate authorities of the unit of local government, without amendment, pass the binding ordinance proposed by such a petition filed with the clerk of the unit of local government not less than 78 days prior to the regular or unit of local government election at which the petition specifies the proposed binding ordinance is to be submitted, then the proposed binding ordinance shall not be submitted to the electors of the unit of local government.

(d) Except as otherwise provided in this Article, petitions filed under this Article shall be governed by Article 28 of this Code.

(e) If no objection to a petition filed under subsection (b) is filed within 5 business days after such petition is filed or if an objection is filed and the appropriate electoral official or board rules the petition sufficient, then the clerk of the unit of local government shall submit the petition to the election official or board for the unit of local government, and the election official or board shall order the proposed ordinance submitted to the electors of the unit of local government at the election specified in the petition.

(f) If, after the election official or board of the unit of local government orders the proposed ordinance to be submitted to the electors of the unit of local government, it determines that the proposed ordinance is too long to be printed in its entirety on the ballot, it shall ask the clerk of the unit of local government to provide a concise statement of its nature. The election official or board shall then cause either the entire proposed ordinance or the concise statement to be printed on the ballot together with a question permitting the elector to indicate approval or disapproval of adoption of the proposed ordinance.

(g) If a majority of those voting on the proposed ordinance indicate approval of its adoption, it shall be passed and have the same effect as if it had been passed by the corporate authorities of the unit of local government, except as provided in subsection (h).

(h) Ordinances adopted under this Article, either by approval of electors at an election or by passage by the corporate authorities under subsection (c), shall not be repealed or amended within 4 years after adoption except by vote of the electors.

(i) The corporate authorities of a unit of local government may submit to its electorate a proposition to repeal or amend an ordinance adopted under this Article at any election in conformance with Article 28 of this Code."

With these changes, House Bill 5207 will have my approval. I respectfully request your concurrence.

Sincerely,

PAT QUINN
Governor