

as opposed to commercial collection of signatures is very interesting. The commercial firm is sustained with the ninety days. There are firms, and I am sure all of you know this, who permit their employees to take time off and go out and solicit signatures. There are also agencies that pay for signatures, but not the average citizen volunteer group. They do not have these funds. They need the time, and they need a reasonable amount of signatures.

I suggest to you that there is a perfect compromise between the three percent of today and the five percent of the gubernatorial vote recommended in this amendment. It is workable. It is applicable, and it is within reach, but not to the point that it would abuse the legislature, and since we are strengthening the governor and strengthening the legislature, let us not weaken the people to the point where they have no voice.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Schloeder.

DELEGATE SCHLOEDER: At this time I yield three minutes to Delegate Marion.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Marion.

DELEGATE MARION: Mr. President, because I believe that one of the most insidious evils in the referendum process is the ability to suspend legislation passed by duly elected representatives of all of the people of the state, a process of suspendability by a small minority of citizens, I support this amendment.

As I see it, it places a premium on referability of law, but makes more difficult, and rightfully so, the process by which a law can be suspended and prevented from taking effect, even though passed by the representatives of our people.

Last week in this Convention we placed a check on hasty, ill-considered legislation by adopting a bicameral legislature. I see no need to place a further check on hasty, ill-considered legislation by allowing the referendum provisions to be as easy as the Committee has recommended that they be.

Put another way, I would think that it is desirable to place a check on the hasty, ill-considered action of a small minority of citizens to block legislation. The value of a referendum process for Maryland, as any other State, is far more important before reapportionment because before reapportionment a minority, or a majority of the representatives in the General Assembly, although representing a minority

of the citizens of the State, could enact legislation affecting all citizens of the State. With reapportionment and fully expecting and anticipating what may yet come from the Committee on the Legislative Branch, I would hope that there would be less need for the referendum process than before in the State of Maryland.

I do not believe, Mr. President, that we should permit the referral or the possible suspension of a law which has been duly considered and passed by the representatives of all the people—

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Marion has twenty seconds—

DELEGATE MARION:—by a small but energetic minority.

I believe that such a process should be reserved for those occasions when the effect of that law cuts deeply into the fabric of the body politic and I would, therefore, urge support of this amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Koss.

DELEGATE KOSS: I have no one else to say anything.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Schloeder, do you have any further statements?

DELEGATE SCHLOEDER: Yes. I would yield the remaining time to Delegate Chabot.

THE CHAIRMAN: There are eight minutes remaining for the proponent.

DELEGATE SCHLOEDER: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to frighten anybody, or send anybody to the doors. I will yield two minutes to Delegate Chabot.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Chabot.

DELEGATE CHABOT: Thank you.

I certainly will not use eight minutes. I just wanted to rise to one point that has found its way as a refrain into some of the comments of some of those who have spoken against the amendment. It is that we are trying to put the entire referendum process out of reach of the people. I would like to point out that in Alaska there is a requirement that a petition be signed by at least ten percent of those who voted in the preceding general election, and that it include signatures from at least two-thirds of the election districts from the State. This is something that we could have followed if our purpose was to put the referendum out of the reach of the people.