

gate wish to speak on this issue? If not, we will call for the vote.

All in favor of the adoption of the Amendment No. 7 say Aye; opposed, No. The Noes seem to have it.

DELEGATE CHABOT: Roll call.

THE CHAIRMAN: The clerk will call the roll.

*(A roll call vote was taken.)*

THE CHAIRMAN: Has everyone registered his vote?

*(There was no response.)*

The clerk will take the roll call.

There being 30 votes in the affirmative and 100 votes in the negative, the motion is lost. Amendment No. 7 having failed to receive a constitutional majority, fails.

DELEGATE BEALL: Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: The Chair recognizes Delegate Beall.

DELEGATE BEALL: I would like to acknowledge my presence. I would like to report my presence.

THE CHAIRMAN: Your presence will be duly noted. We can do that for everyone at the end.

Now the next order of business is the consideration of the Minority Report S&E-1. by Delegate Hutchinson, to reduce the signatures required to three percent of the total votes cast for governor in the last election.

Do you want to come forward, Delegate Hutchinson, and present the minority report?

DELEGATE HUTCHINSON: Mr. Chairman, Committee Recommendation S&E-1, section 3, reads as follows:

"A petition is sufficient to refer a law to referendum if it is signed by a number of registered voters equal to five percent of the total number of votes cast for governor in the most recent gubernatorial election."

Since 1915 the people of Maryland have been afforded the right of direct participation in government by the use of the referendum.

Until 1962 only 10,000 signatures were needed in order to refer a law to a vote of the people. In 1962 the General Assembly

increased the petition requirement, through a constitutional amendment, to three percent of the total number of votes cast for governor in the most recent gubernatorial election.

It must be remembered that the three percent requirement was established only five years ago. It was the General Assembly, the men who are directly affected by the referendum, who established this three percent requirement. What their reasons for establishing this three percent figure were I do not know, but it is quite evident that they had reasons for not raising the figure above three percent. I do not see any reason to do so today, nor does the minority.

In the fifty-two years that the referendum has been a part of the governmental process in Maryland, the people have used it on only twelve occasions, as Dr. Pullen pointed out. On eight of these questions the voters approved the actions of the General Assembly. On only four occasions did the voters disapprove the General Assembly's actions. Thus, it is quite evident that the people have not made frivolous use of the referendum.

In fact, it has never been pointed out to me or to the minority how the people of Maryland have so abused their right to referendum that it is now necessary to make it more difficult for the people to vote on issues which they are directly affected by.

If the proponents of the five percent requirement simply want a higher signature requirement, then this will be naturally accomplished through an increase in the population in the state.

At present 27,600 signatures are necessary to refer a law of a vote of the people. If five percent were the requirement then approximately 46,000 signatures would be necessary.

Projected population figures show that in 1980 the number of people in Maryland will be approximately 5,331,000. If the signature requirement for referendum remains at three percent and the same percent of the people vote, then in order for a bill to be referred to a vote of the people, approximately 48,000 signatures will be required. If the percentage requirement is increased to five percent, then approximately 80,000 signatures will be required.

We of the minority feel that this unduly deters the people's right to referendum. If