

What Is a Member Referendum?



A member referendum is the avenue by which any active member of the WSBA can affect policy set by the Board of Governors. A referendum can reverse or modify a final action taken by the Board of Governors, enact a resolution, or amend the WSBA Bylaws.

Qualifying a referendum

To put a member referendum before the membership, any active member may file a petition for a referendum by meeting the following requirements:

- File the petition with the WSBA executive director within 90 days of a final action, if the subject of the petition seeks to reverse or modify that final action taken by the Board of Governors;
- Provide the exact language of the proposed resolution, Bylaw amendment, or modification/reversal of a Board of Governors' action;
- Submit signatures from five percent of the WSBA active membership at the time the petition is filed; and
- Ensure that the subject matter of the referendum complies with the provisions of General Rule 12, which sets out the authorized activities of the WSBA.

Ballot Preparation

Any petition for a referendum that meets the above requirements must be put to a vote of the active membership within 90 days of the date that the petition was filed. Prior to that time, the proponents of the action may submit a "statement for" while the opponents of the action may submit a "statement against." Additionally, each side may submit shorter rebuttal statements. The statements will be included on the ballot.

Voting Procedures

Pursuant to the WSBA Bylaws, the ballot will be distributed electronically, with paper ballots going to those without valid email addresses on file with WSBA. The petition and ballot with accompanying statements also will be posted on the WSBA website. WSBA Bylaws require that members are given no less than 30 days to return their ballot from the date of distribution.

Voting results

Paper ballots will be counted in the WSBA office, and electronic ballots will be counted by the online voting vendor. The election process will be supervised by an Election Board of not less than three active members appointed by the President. No less than two members of the Election Board shall be present at any count of paper ballots. Any active member of the Bar may be present during this count.

To pass, a referendum requires a majority of those active members who vote. Results are announced via a broadcast email to members, posted on the WSBA website, and published in *Bar News*.