

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 6293

To require the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate to establish a process by which registered voters may sign national discharge petitions with respect to bills and joint resolutions introduced in or referred to the House and Senate, to require the House or Senate to hold a vote on the passage of any bill or joint resolution if a certain number of registered voters sign the national discharge petition for the bill or joint resolution, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 28, 2018

Mr. RUIZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To require the Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary of the Senate to establish a process by which registered voters may sign national discharge petitions with respect to bills and joint resolutions introduced in or referred to the House and Senate, to require the House or Senate to hold a vote on the passage of any bill or joint resolution if a certain number of registered voters sign the national discharge petition for the bill or joint resolution, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; FINDINGS.**

4       (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5       “Right to Petition Congress Act”.

6       (b) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

7               (1) The First Amendment of the Constitution  
8               of the United States establishes the right of the peo-  
9               ple to “petition the Government” for redress.

10              (2) Technology has dramatically expanded the  
11              mechanisms through which the people can effectively  
12              petition the Government.

13              (3) Congressional leadership and individual  
14              Members of Congress have repeatedly blocked votes  
15              in the House of Representatives and Senate on mat-  
16              ters on which a majority of the American people  
17              have publicly expressed the desire for redress.

18              (4) The refusal to allow votes in the House and  
19              Senate prevents Congressional deliberation on mat-  
20              ters reflecting the will of the people, and in some in-  
21              stances, a majority of Congress.

22       **SEC. 2. NATIONAL DISCHARGE PETITIONS.**

23       (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROCESS.—Not later than  
24       6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the  
25       Clerk of the House of Representatives and the Secretary

1 of the Senate shall establish a process under which the  
2 Clerk and the Secretary—

3 (1) shall develop a national discharge petition  
4 for a bill or joint resolution which has been intro-  
5 duced in the House or Senate (as the case may be)  
6 during a Congress or which as been referred to the  
7 House or Senate (as the case may be) after passage  
8 by the other House during a Congress;

9 (2) shall make each such national discharge pe-  
10 tition available for signature, including signature by  
11 online methods, by qualified individuals; and

12 (3) shall compile the signatures provided for  
13 each such national discharge petition.

14 (b) REQUIRING REQUEST OF SPONSOR FOR AVAIL-  
15 ABILITY OF PETITION FOR INTRODUCED LEGISLATION.—

16 In the case of a bill or joint resolution introduced in the  
17 House of Senate, the Clerk or the Secretary (as the case  
18 may be) may develop a national discharge petition under  
19 this section only at the request of the sponsor of the bill  
20 or joint resolution.

21 (c) METHODS.—The Clerk and the Secretary may  
22 carry out this section using such methods as the Clerk  
23 and Secretary consider appropriate, including providing  
24 for the availability of national discharge petitions and the

1 acceptance of signatures on such petitions exclusively  
2 through electronic means.

3 (d) PROHIBITING RELEASE OF INFORMATION ON  
4 SIGNATURES.—The Clerk and the Secretary may not dis-  
5 close or transmit to any person any information regarding  
6 the identification of any individual who signs a national  
7 discharge petition under this section, including the individ-  
8 ual’s name or place of residence, and shall ensure that  
9 the prohibition set forth in this subsection is displayed  
10 prominently in any website used to carry out this section.

11 **SEC. 3. CONSIDERATION OF BILL OR JOINT RESOLUTION**  
12 **IN HOUSE OR SENATE.**

13 (a) VOTE IN HOUSE OR SENATE.—If the Speaker of  
14 the House of Representatives or the Majority Leader of  
15 the Senate receives a certification under subsection (b)  
16 from the Clerk of the House of Representatives or the Sec-  
17 retary of the Senate (as the case may be) that a national  
18 discharge petition with respect to a bill or joint resolution  
19 during a Congress has met the threshold for consideration  
20 of the bill or joint resolution, and if the bill or joint resolu-  
21 tion meets the additional requirements described in sub-  
22 section (c), the Speaker or Majority Leader shall ensure  
23 that the House or Senate holds a vote on final passage  
24 of such bill or joint resolution not later than the earlier  
25 of—

1           (1) the expiration of the 15-day period (exclud-  
2       ing Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays,  
3       and any day on which neither House is in session  
4       because of an adjournment sine die, a recess of more  
5       than 3 days, or an adjournment of more than 3  
6       days) beginning on the date the Speaker or Minority  
7       Leader receives the certification; or

8           (2) the last day of the Congress.

9       (b) THRESHOLD FOR CERTIFICATION.—

10           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Clerk or the Secretary  
11       (as the case may be) shall provide the Speaker of  
12       the House or the Majority Leader of the Senate with  
13       a certification that a national discharge petition with  
14       respect to a bill or joint resolution has met the  
15       threshold for consideration of the bill or joint resolu-  
16       tion if the Clerk or the Secretary determines that—

17           (A) the number of valid signatures on the  
18       petition is equal to or greater than 5,000,000  
19       (based on the most recent information available  
20       from the chief State election official of each  
21       State); and

22           (B) not more than 25 percent of the num-  
23       ber of valid signatures on the petition are from  
24       residents of a single State.

1           (2) VALIDITY OF SIGNATURES.—An individual’s  
2           signature shall be considered valid for purposes of a  
3           national discharge petition only if the individual pro-  
4           vides with the signature—

5                   (A) an attestation, made under penalty of  
6           perjury, that the individual is a qualified indi-  
7           vidual; and

8                   (B) the name of the State in which the in-  
9           dividual is registered to vote in elections for  
10          Federal office.

11          (c) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSIDER-  
12          ATION.—The additional requirements described in this  
13          subsection with respect to a bill or joint resolution are as  
14          follows:

15                (1) Not fewer than 50 Members of the House  
16          of Representatives (including Delegates and the  
17          Resident Commissioner) or 11 Senators (as the case  
18          may be) are cosponsors of the bill or joint resolution.

19                (2) The Congressional Budget Office or the  
20          Congressional Research Service has prepared and  
21          made available to the Members and Senators an  
22          analysis of the bill or joint resolution.

23          **SEC. 4. INFORMATION ON VOTER REGISTRATION.**

24          As part of the process established for national dis-  
25          charge petitions under this Act, the Clerk shall provide

1 on the official public website of the Office of the Clerk,  
2 and the Secretary shall provide on the official public  
3 website of the Office of the Secretary, a hyperlink through  
4 which an individual may obtain information on how to reg-  
5 ister to vote in elections for Federal office in the State  
6 in which the individual resides.

7 **SEC. 5. COORDINATION WITH STATE ELECTION OFFICIALS.**

8 The chief State election official of each State shall  
9 enter into such agreements with the Clerk and the Sec-  
10 retary as may be required to enable the Clerk and Sec-  
11 retary to carry out this Act.

12 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

13 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
14 this Act such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year  
15 2018 and each succeeding fiscal year.

16 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

17 In this Act, the following definitions apply:

18 (1) The term “chief State election official”  
19 means, with respect to a State, the individual des-  
20 ignated by the State under section 10 of the Na-  
21 tional Voter Registration Act of 1993 (52 U.S.C.  
22 20509) to be responsible for the coordination of the  
23 State’s responsibilities under such Act.

24 (2) The term “Clerk” means the Clerk of the  
25 House of Representatives.

1           (3) The term “qualified individual” means an  
2           individual who, at the time of providing a signature  
3           on a national discharge petition, is registered to vote  
4           in elections for Federal office held in the State in  
5           which the individual resides.

6           (4) The term “Secretary” means the Secretary  
7           of the Senate.

8           (5) The term “State” means each of the several  
9           States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth  
10          of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Com-  
11          monwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and  
12          the United States Virgin Islands.

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