



The Referendum Act

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1. WHAT LAWS GOVERN THE REFERENDUM ACT

The Referendum Act No. 2 of 1999 was signed on February 25, 1999 to provide rules for the conduct of a Referendum.

2. WHY A REFERENDUM

Three reasons for the conduct of a Referendum in Belize are:

- Concerns of "sufficient" national importance
- Change to Chapter II of the Belize Constitution which affects the guaranteed fundamental rights and freedom
- Any proposed settlement with Guatemala for resolving the Belize/Guatemala Dispute

3. HOW

(1)

- The National Assembly passes a resolution declaring an issue of "sufficient" national importance

Or

- Request made by the Prime Minister if Law provides for holding of Referendum

(2) Within 30 days of (1) the Governor-General to issue a Writ of Referendum

(3) Date for holding of Referendum to be not less than 30 days after the issue of the Writ

(4) The Writ indicates where Referendum is to take place

4. WHAT IS A WRIT

It is a formal written command issued by a court or ruling authority to act or refrain from acting in a certain way.

5. WHO CAN VOTE IN A REFERENDUM

- Where the Referendum is held in the whole of Belize:
 - All those duly registered electors who are qualified to vote for the election of members of the House of Representative, at the date of the holding of the Referendum
- Where the Referendum is held only in an area of Belize:
 - All those duly registered electors in that area

6. THE VOTING PROCESS

Please refer to the Election Process as the Procedure is the same as for General Elections. Electors vote where they are registered.

(a) The Management and conduct of Elections Day activities are the responsibility of Senior Public Officers.

The Representation of The People Act applies:

Voting Hours-7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

The Voting Procedure

6:00 a.m.

- Signs and Notices posted

6:45 a.m.

- Examinations of ballot boxes
- Certified by Polling Agents and Other Witnesses

7:00 a.m.

- Presiding Officer invites Electors to vote in an orderly fashion

7:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Each Elector is Verified

- Elector may vote with or without Voters' ID if on Voters' List or Record Card in Binder
- Name is announced

Ballot Paper is Issued

- Presiding Officer initials ballot paper
- Hands Ballot Paper to Elector
- Elector shows forefinger of right hand-left hand if no right hand
- Dips forefinger to joint in indelible ink
- Poll Clerk marks name off the Voters' List

Elector Votes

- Elector directed to voting booth
- Marks X
- Folds ballot to show initials but conceals vote
- Places in ballot box

6:00 P.M.

Close of Polls

- Presiding Officer announces closing of polls
- Police Officer steps behind the last Elector in line
- Closing and sealing of ballot box certified by agents and other witnesses
- Transportation of ballot boxes to Counting Station

Produced by Elections & Boundaries Department