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Dec. 12, 2014

Be Ahead of the Curve - Discover 2016 Ballot Information



Legislative Ballot Issue Proposals

[Read up](#) on the proposed ballot issues filed for consideration during the 2015 legislative session.



News About Ballot Issues

[Here](#) you will find mentions of ballot issues or election law on news blogs and websites.

Panelists Discuss, Explain Issue 3 Amendment is "tremendous change in culture"



photo by Greg Steinsiek, Clinton School of Public Service

Less than five hours after the polls closed Nov. 4, a constitutional amendment approved by voters that very day took effect. A month after the election, Arkansans are trying to better understand the impact of their decision to restrict lobbyist spending at the state capitol, to create a new panel overseeing pay for elected officials, and to make changes to legislative term limits.

"There's a lot of people who were shocked that it passed," said Sen. Jon Woods at a recent discussion on [Issue 3](#) at the Clinton School of Public Service.

Ballot issue research has shown that people tend to vote against measures they find confusing and stick with the status quo when they're unsure about the impact of a proposed measure. Issue 3's ballot title represented a 22-page legislative bill and its proposal to change term limits attracted opposition from a group that toured the state with a Trojan horse.

But Woods, who cosponsored the amendment with Rep. Warwick Sabin of Little Rock, wasn't surprised that Issue 3 succeeded because polling ahead of the election showed the measure passing with 56 percent support. The Springdale senator said he was confident that it was going to pass, though people in other areas of the state doubted it.

"I was surprised but I thought it had a chance. There was no campaign for it," said Scott Trotter, a Little Rock attorney who helped Woods and Sabin refine some of the technical details in the constitutional amendment.

But "there is a history in this state of voters approving ethics reforms," Trotter told the [panel discussion](#) audience, such as campaign funding disclosures and the creation of the Arkansas Ethics Commission.

"The ethics provisions were up front in the ballot title and I think that can help explain the margin of success," he said.

Over a span of 76 years, Arkansans have approved just over half of all ballot measures put on the ballot by state legislators. Last month, voters approved all three constitutional amendments proposed by the

legislature, as well as an act proposed by the public to increase the state's minimum wage.

The only issue that failed was a proposal to legalize alcohol sales statewide. Voters in all 75 counties approved the new minimum wage rate, while all but six counties rejected statewide alcohol sales.

The panel discussion on Issue 3 attracted a large crowd Dec. 8. Lobbyists outnumbered elected officials, according to an informal poll by the panel's moderator. Panelists said lobbyists were still trying to figure out the impact of Issue 3.

"Lobbyists welcome this but we just want to know the rules and not get the members in trouble," said Randy Zook, CEO of the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce. Zook participated in the panel discussion and said he expected there would be court challenges seeking to clarify confusion regarding changes to term limits.

"A lot of good lawyers say the clock starts over for everyone," Zook said about the amendment, which will now allow legislators to serve up to 16 years in either the Senate or House where as previously they were limited to a total of eight years in the state senate and six years in the house of representatives. "It needs to be resolved."

Woods disagreed with the idea that the amendment would wipe the slate clean for legislators.

"We didn't scratch the existing term limits. We amended it," he said.

Questions from the audience ranged from the law's impact on travel, to campaign contributions from political action committees and the make up of a commission that will set salaries for legislators and judges.

Sabin said he has filed a bill for the upcoming legislative session to flesh out more details, and called the amendment "a tremendous change in culture." He hopes to enable the Ethics Commission to advise on any questions that come up as a result of the new amendment.

Issue 3 has already been subject of at least one Attorney General's opinion request. Shortly after the election, Rep. Davy Carter, who is speaker of the House, sought clarification from the Attorney General's office whether the constitutional amendment prohibited participation in legislative receptions put on by associations and public interest groups. The [Attorney General's opinion](#) offered a quick "no" because the amendment's definition of a "gift" does not include food and drink at a planned event where all members of a governmental body are invited.

Legislators go back into session Jan. 12, 2015, which means bills for the 2016 ballot will be introduced and discussed in coming months.

The [Public Policy Center](#) will continue to follow these issues and keep you updated on the 2016 ballot measures.

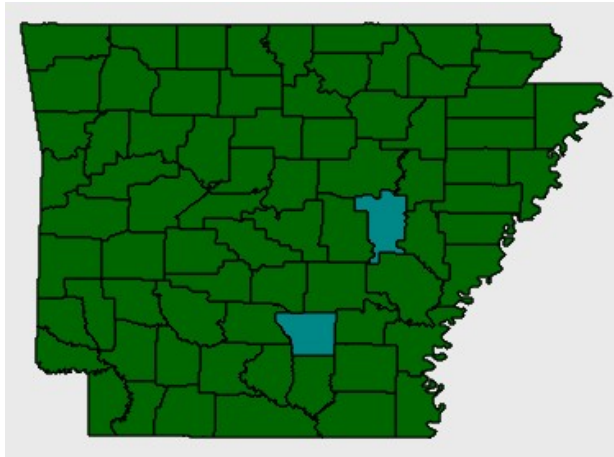
Did you know?

Three different groups already have approval to circulate petitions for the 2016 ballot. The proposals all seek to legalize the growing, selling and possession of marijuana, otherwise known as the cannabis plant. [Click here](#) to read more about the different petitions.

Where Did Arkansas' 5 Ballot Issues Pass or Fail?

Voters approved all ballot issues except Issue 4. Scroll down to see where voters approved or rejected the various ballot issues. You can click on each issue title to read the Public Policy Center's fact sheet on the ballot measure.

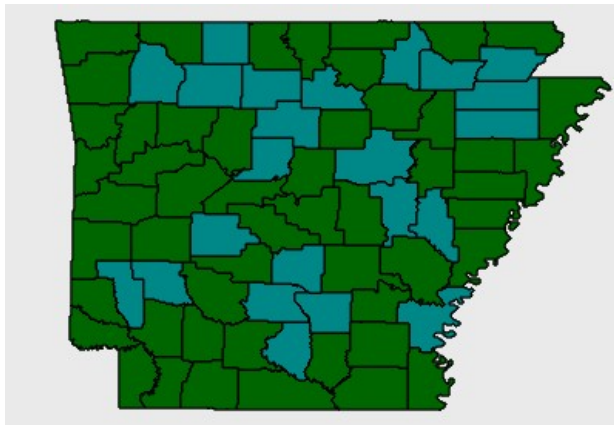
Issue 1 - An amendment empowering the General Assembly to provide for legislative committee review and approval of state agencies administrative rules.



Counties voting against: Cleveland and Prairie

	Total	Color
FOR	469,431	
AGAINST	325,396	

Issue 2 - An amendment allowing more time to gather signatures on a state-wide initiative or referendum petition only if the petition as originally filed contained at least 75 % of the valid signatures required.

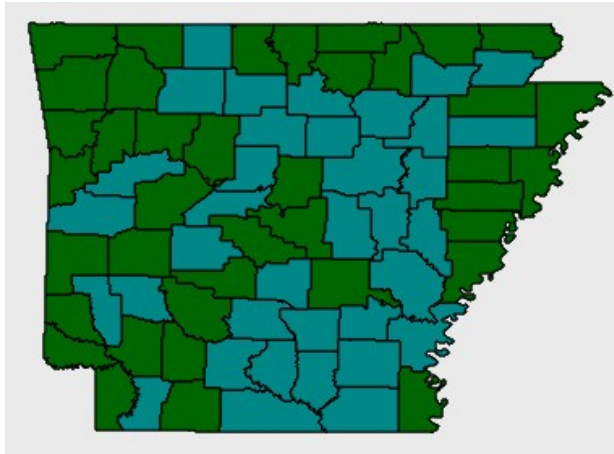


Counties voting against: Madison, Newton, Boone, Searcy, Stone, Van Buren, Conway, Garland, Pike, Howard, Grant, Dallas, Cleveland, Calhoun, White, Prairie, Monroe, Desha, Sharp, Lawrence, Green, Craighead and Poinsett

	Total	Color
FOR	425,709	
AGAINST	372,784	

Issue 3 - An amendment regulating contributions to candidates for state or local office, barring gifts from lobbyists to certain state officials, providing for setting salaries of certain state

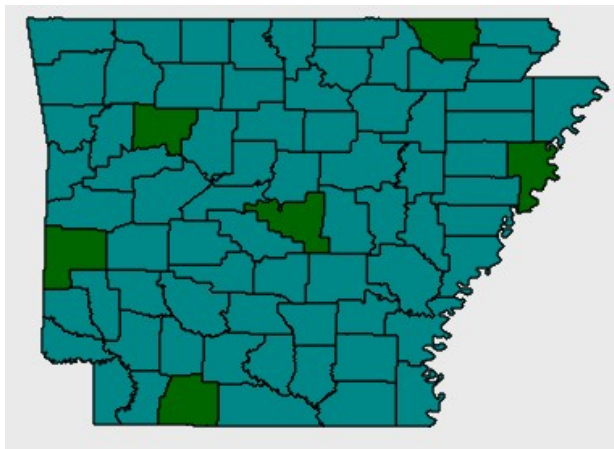
officials, and setting term limits for members of the general assembly.



Counties voting against: Logan, Scott, Pike, Howard, Lafayette, Boone, Newton, Searcy, Stone, Van Buren, Conway, Perry, Garland, Cleburne, Independence, Jackson, Lawrence, Greene, Poinsett, Woodruff, White, Monroe, Prairie, Lonoke, Arkansas, Desha, Lincoln, Drew, Ashley, Cleveland, Bradley, Union, Calhoun, Grant, Dallas, Ouachita and Union.

	Total	Color
FOR	428,206	
AGAINST	388,459	

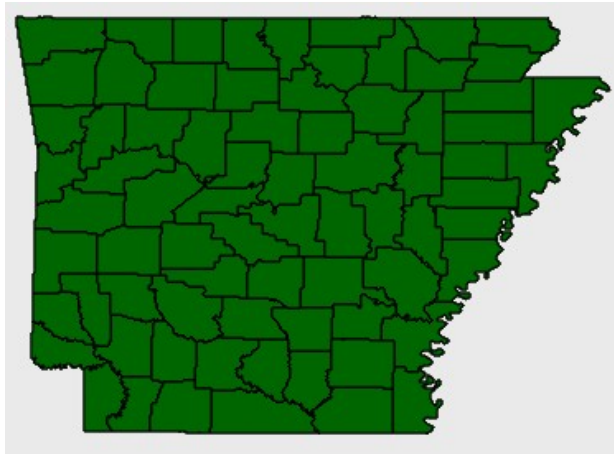
Issue 4 - The Arkansas Alcoholic Beverage Amendment



Counties voting against: All except Crittenden, Randolph, Pulaski, Johnson, Polk and Columbia

	Total	Color
FOR	354,446	
AGAINST	477,877	

Issue 5 - An Act to Increase the Arkansas Minimum Wage



Counties voting against: None

	Total	Color
FOR	548,789	
AGAINST	283,524	

Source: [Arkansas Secretary of State's Office](#)

Looking Forward - Potential 2016 Ballot Issues from the Public

Attorney General Opinions

Approved for circulation

Nov. 3, 2014 - [The Arkansas Hemp and Marijuana Amendment](#) - A ballot measure to legalize the cultivation, production, distribution, sale, purchase, possession and use of the cannabis plant in Arkansas was certified for signature gathering, according to [Opinion No. 2014-119](#). Mary L. Berry of Summit submitted the measure.

Aug. 5, 2014 - [The Arkansas Hemp and Cannabis Amendment](#) - A ballot measure to legalize the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, sale, possession and use of the cannabis plant in Arkansas was certified for signature gathering. [Opinion No. 2014-079](#) said the proposed constitutional amendment was identical to a previously approved measure. Frederick W. Porter of Hot Springs submitted the measure.

Aug. 14, 2014 - [The Arkansas Medical Cannabis Act](#) - A ballot measure to legalize the use of medical marijuana, and a system for growing and selling medical marijuana was certified for signature gathering. The ballot measure was similar to a recent proposal that did not receive enough signatures for the 2014 ballot. In [Opinion No. 2014-086](#), the Attorney General cautioned the group that "according to my experience there is a direct correlation between the length and complexity of initiated acts and their susceptibility to a successful ballot title challenge." Melissa Fults, campaign director of Arkansans for Compassionate Care 2016, submitted the measure.

In the News

News organizations from across the state have been reporting on ballot measures and Arkansas

election/voting issues. Here are links to stories we have come across:

- "Arkansas Voters Approve Minimum Wage Hike, Say No to Statewide Alcohol Sales" - [Associated Press](#)
- "Arkansas Legislators More Powerful After Election" - [Associated Press](#)
- "Key to Minimum Wage Hikes: Ballot Initiatives" - [Forbes.com](#)
- "GOP backers say voter ID not over" - [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#)
- "2016 Campaign Finance Ballot Proposal Submitted to Arkansas Attorney General" - [KUAR](#)
- "Alcohol board's 22 rules criticized" - [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#)
- "Beebe: Put road tax back on ballot" - [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#)
- "Appointments for Independent Citizens Commission Announced" - [Arkansas Business](#)
- "Issue 3 raises exec's concern" - [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#)
- "Issue 3 Political Roundtable" - [Talk Business & Politics \(video\)](#)

The 2015 Legislative Session & Proposed Ballot Issues

SJR1 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning Civil Claims and Court Procedures

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Eddie Joe Williams](#)

Stay Connected

Know of a potential ballot issue?

E-mail the information to publicpolicycenter@uaex.edu or call Kristin Higgins at 501-671-2160.

You can find past newsletters and ballot issue fact sheets at

<http://www.uaex.edu/business-communities/voter-education/state-ballot-issues.aspx>



The Public Policy Center was established in 2004 to provide Arkansans with timely, credible, unaligned and research-based information and education about public issues. Public issues are defined as pressing and emerging issues that involve multiple points of view and have widespread consequences. Our goals are to:

- increase citizen knowledge, awareness and understanding of public issues;
- enhance public participation in decisions regarding public issues and
- help citizens craft, evaluate and implement alternative solutions to public issues.

University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture - <http://www.uaex.edu>

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