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Feb. 17, 2014

NEWS & NOTES

Arkansas Ballot Issues

Popular Name Issue Resolved

State officials worked past the confusion of who is responsible for writing popular names for legislative ballot issues and released titles Friday of two measures expected to appear on the November ballot.

[Issue No. 1 and Issue No. 3](#) for the 2014 ballot now have the required descriptions that are meant to help voters quickly identify a measure's purpose. Staff from the Attorney General and Secretary of State offices were still working on the popular name for Issue No. 2 on Friday.

The legislature's three ballot issues took an unexpected detour last month when it was revealed that a new state law removed the attorney general as the author of popular names. Ballot issue sponsors didn't include popular names in the three proposed amendments, and without those popular names, the issues couldn't appear on the 2014 ballot.

To resolve the conflict, legislators last month asked the two state offices to work together on preparing the names. On Feb. 11, state senators approved [Senate Resolution 12](#), which formally recognized their approval of the solution offered by the two state offices.

Arkansas is one of 18 states where citizens can place issues on a statewide ballot after gathering signatures from registered voters. A complete list of ballot issues approved for signature gathering can be found below. The legislature also has the authority to refer three issues to the voters. The 2014 ballot will not be certified as final until July, but the legislature's three issues already are known and described below.

The [Public Policy Center](#) will continue to follow these issues and keep you updated on potential 2014 ballot measures. The Center will release fact sheets on proposed ballot issues referred from the legislature and the public closer to the November 2014 election.

Correction: Arkansas' secretary of state is Mark Martin. His last name was incorrect in last month's News & Notes.



Legislative Ballot Issues

Read up on the three ballot issues referred by the legislature. We include links to the ballot proposal, sponsors and financial impact forms.

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Attorney General Opinions

Read the latest Attorney General Opinions regarding proposed ballot issues.

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Ballot Proposal News

Here you will find mentions of proposed ballot issues on news blogs and websites.

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Attorney General Opinions

The purpose of an Attorney General review and certification is to ensure that the popular name and ballot title honestly, intelligibly, and fairly set forth the purpose of the proposed amendment or act. Only after a ballot issue is certified can groups circulate petitions seeking voter signatures in support of putting the issue on the ballot.

Rejected Measures:

Jan. 30, 2014 - Citing ambiguity in the proposed law, the attorney general's office again rejected a proposed constitutional amendment that would repeal "all laws" prohibiting the production, distribution, sale and use of the cannabis plant and products. [Opinion No. 2014-004](#) said the proposal submitted by Lieutenant Colonel Marjorie LeClair of Shirley contained multiple confusing passages that needed to be fixed before the proposal could be approved.

Jan. 28, 2014 - A proposed constitutional amendment to "require voter approval of the creation or increase of any tax, fine or fee," was rejected because of several ambiguities in the text. [Opinion No. 2014-003](#) said the proposal submitted by David Dinwiddie of Pine Bluff did not describe how the current law would be changed. Dinwiddie is the Libertarian party candidate for lieutenant governor.

Certified Measures - Approved for signature gathering:

Jan. 4, 2014 - A ballot question committee received approval for signature gathering for its proposal to change state law to raise the state's minimum wage. [Opinion No. 2013-156](#) certified An Act to Increase the Arkansas Minimum Wage submitted by Stephen Copley of Little Rock who is chairman of [Give Arkansas A Raise Now](#).

Nov. 7, 2013 - A proposed amendment that would recognize marriage being between two people regardless of gender, and would repeal an existing amendment banning same sex marriage was approved. [Opinion No. 2013-135](#) certified the measure submitted by Jack Weir III of Maumelle. Weir submitted the measure as "The Arkansas Marriage Amendment," although the Attorney General's office offered a "more correct name" of "The Arkansas Same-Sex Marriage Amendment."

Oct. 3, 2013 - Arkansans for Compassionate Care's proposed ballot issue seeking to make the medical use and sale of marijuana legal was approved for signature gathering. [Opinion No. 2013-118](#) certified "[The Arkansas Medical Cannabis Act](#)," which was submitted by Melissa Fults, Campaign Director for Arkansans for Compassionate Care, of Hensley.

Sept. 19, 2013 - A proposed constitutional amendment seeking to repeal an existing amendment on same-sex marriage was certified. [Opinion No. 2013-114](#) certified the measure "Repeal of the Arkansas Marriage Amendment." The proposal was submitted by Christina Harrison, founder of Arkansans for Equality, of Little Rock. [Arkansans](#) approved the original amendment in 2004 with 75 percent of the vote in favor.

Sept. 16, 2013 - A proposed constitutional amendment to change the terms of county officials from two years to four years was certified. [Opinion No. 2013-110](#) certified the ballot title, "Four Year Terms of Office For Elected County Officials, Justices of the Peace, and Constables." David Dinwiddie of Pine Bluff submitted the ballot issue.

Aug. 6, 2013 - Arkansans for Responsible Medicine saw their proposed ballot issue seeking to make the medical use and sale of marijuana legal approved for signature gathering. [Opinion No. 2013-081](#) said the popular name and ballot title for the "Arkansas Medical Marijuana Act" are "sufficient as proposed." The proposed ballot issue was submitted by David Couch, representing Arkansans for Responsible Medicine.

Jan. 1, 2013 - In [Opinion No. 2012-148](#), the Attorney General approved the popular name and ballot title submitted by the Regnat Populus ballot question committee. The committee submitted "The Campaign Finance and Lobbying Act of 2014."

- Constitutional amendments require 78,133 valid signatures
- State statutes require 62,507 valid signatures
 - The deadline to submit signatures is July 7, 2014

In the News

- "Group Urges Raise in Arkansas's Minimum Wage" - [Arkansas Matters](#)
- "Proposal for vote on tax changes rejected" - [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#)
- "Looking ahead: Work begins on a marriage equality measure for 2016" - [Arkansas Times](#)
- "Regnat Populus ethics group renews canvassing for initiated ethics law" - [Arkansas Times](#)
- "Election 2014: Language Approved for Three Arkansas Ballot Measures" - [Arkansas News Bureau](#)
- "Proposal to avoid special election for lieutenant governor advances" - [Arkansas News Bureau](#)

Legislative Ballot Measures On the 2014 Ballot

[Issue No. 1 - Constitutional Amendment](#)

An Amendment Empowering the General Assembly to Provide for Legislative Committee Review and Approval of State Agencies' Administrative Rules

This proposal asks to give legislative committees prior review of new state agency rules before they go into effect.

Sponsor: [Sen. Dismang](#)

Additional Information: [Legislative Impact Statement](#)

[Issue No. 2 - Constitutional Amendment](#)

An Amendment Concerning Initiative and Referendum*

This proposal asks voters to establish a signature threshold for ballot issue groups to meet if the group wants or needs more time to collect additional signatures after turning in petitions to the Secretary of State. Petitions would need to contain at least 75 percent of valid signatures for a group to receive more time. Groups are usually given 30 additional days after submitting their original petitions to gather more signatures in case they fall short on the required number to place an issue on the ballot.

Sponsor: [Sen. Sample](#)

Issue No. 3 - Constitutional Amendment

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

This proposal asks voters to:

- Allow legislators to serve 16 years total in the House or Senate, whereas they are now limited to specific number of years in each chamber.
- Approve creating an independent commission to set salaries of state elected officials.
- Approve placing limits on lobbying by former legislators and set limits on campaign donations and gifts from lobbyists.

Sponsor: [Rep. Sabin](#)

Opposition: [Arkansas Term Limits](#)

Additional Information: [Legislative Question Committee filing](#)

*popular name hasn't been released yet

Stay Connected

Know of a potential ballot issue? E-mail the information to publicpolicycenter@uaex.edu.
You can find fact sheets on past ballot issues at <http://ppc.uaex.edu>



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.

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