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July 8, 2014

NEWS & NOTES

Arkansas Ballot Issues

Alcohol Expansion, Minimum Wage Step Closer to 2014 Ballot



photo courtesy of Arkansas Secretary of State's Office
An Arkansas Secretary of State's Office employee counts pages of signatures submitted Monday by Give Arkansas A Raise Now, a group seeking to ask voters in November to increase the state's minimum wage.

Thirty part-time workers are combing through thousands of pages of signatures submitted Monday, July 7 by supporters of expanded alcohol sales and an increase in the state's minimum wage.

Rob Hammons, elections division director for the Arkansas Secretary of State's Office, wants to know by July 21, if not before, whether the two ballot measure groups have enough signatures to qualify for the November ballot. Hammons only has until August 21 to tell counties what will be on the ballot, and by state law, the two groups may qualify for an additional 30 days to collect more signatures.

The Arkansas Alcoholic Beverage Amendment needs 78,133 signatures to qualify for the November ballot because it is a proposed amendment to the state's constitution. The proposal seeks to allow the manufacture, sale, distribution and transportation of alcohol statewide.

An Act to Increase the Arkansas Minimum Wage needs fewer signatures, 62,507, because it is a proposed state law. The proposal seeks to raise the current state minimum wage from \$6.25 an hour to \$7.50 an hour in 2015, to \$8 an hour in 2016 and \$8.50 per hour in 2017.

Signature gatherers stepped up their efforts over the holiday weekend to meet the Monday deadline to submit their hundreds of pages of voter petitions. Representatives from both groups told local media outlets that they were confident they would make the 2014 ballot.

"At this point, I'm confident we'll meet it on the first try," Stephen Copley, chairman of Give Arkansas A Raise Now, told the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette.

Give Arkansas A Raise Now submitted 77,288 signatures, according to the Arkansas Secretary of State's Office. Let Arkansas Decide, as the alcohol effort is known, turned in 12,028 pages of petitions, and 84,969 signatures.

A measure to legalize marijuana for medical purposes, and a second one to legalize marijuana in general, did not submit signatures Monday. Representatives told local media that they knew they did not have enough signatures.

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.

Did You Know?

Alcohol has been on the statewide ballot six times since 1912. Voters rejected all but one measure - the local option in 1942. The 1942 ballot issue reduced the number of signatures needed from 35 percent to 15 percent to call for a local election on the wet/dry issue. Legislators increased the signature requirement to 30 percent in 1985 and to 38 percent in 1993.

Source: [Initiative & Referendum Institute](#) and the [Arkansas Attorney General's Office](#)



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.

[Read More](#)



Attorney Secretary of State

Click here to find out the latest on ballot measures seeking a spot on the 2014 ballot.

[Read More](#)



Ballot Proposal News

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

[Read More](#)

Ballot Measures Submitted to Secretary of State

An initiated amendment petition must contain at least 78,133 signatures and the required numbers from at least 15 counties. An initiated act petition must contain at least 62,507 signatures and the required numbers from 15 counties. The Secretary of State has until August 21 to certify November's ballot measures.

Alcohol

- The "Arkansas Alcoholic Beverage Amendment" seeks to legalize the statewide sale, manufacture and transport of alcohol. Little Rock attorney David Couch submitted the constitutional amendment. Read the Attorney General's Opinion certifying the measure at [Opinion No. 2014-049](#).

No website found for "Let Arkansas Decide!"

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#)

Minimum Wage

- The "An Act to Increase the Arkansas Minimum Wage" seeks to raise the state's minimum wage from \$6.25 to \$8.50 by 2017. Stephen Copley of Little Rock submitted the proposed state law. Read the Attorney General's Opinion certifying the measure at [Opinion No. 2013-156](#).

Website for "Give Arkansas A Raise Now": <http://givearkansasaraisenow.org/>
[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#)
[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#)

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:

- "Ballot Initiatives: No for Medical Marijuana, Yes for Expanded Alcohol, Minimum Wage Hike" - [Associated Press](#)
- "Minimum wage, alcohol sales petitions submitted" - [Associated Press](#)
- "Arkansas Group Pushes For Minimum Wage Hike Vote" - [NWAonline](#)

Legislative Ballot Measures On the 2014 Ballot

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

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

Ballot title: "An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution providing that administrative rules promulgated by state agencies shall not become effective until reviewed and approved by a legislative committee of the General Assembly."

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

Sponsor: [Sen. Dismang](#)

Additional Information: [Legislative Impact Statement](#)

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

Popular name: "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"

Ballot title: "Proposing an amendment to Article 5, Section 1, of the Arkansas Constitution concerning initiative and referendum; and providing certain requirements for the correction or amendment of insufficient state-wide petitions"

This proposal asks voters to establish a signature threshold for ballot issue groups to meet before they are permitted more time to collect additional signatures. At least 75 percent of signatures submitted to the Secretary of State's office for review would need to be valid in order for a group to receive the additional time. Current practice calls for giving any group 30 additional days to gather and submit new signatures, in case their original petitions fall short of the required number of voter signatures to place an issue on the ballot.

Sponsor: [Sen. Sample](#)

[Issue No. 3 - Constitutional Amendment](#)

Popular name:

"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"

Ballot title: "To amend the Arkansas Constitution concerning elected state officials; prohibiting members of the General Assembly and elected constitutional officers of the executive department from accepting gifts from lobbyists, and defining key terms relating to that prohibition; prohibiting members of the General Assembly from setting their own salaries and the salaries of elected constitutional officers of the executive department, justices, and judges; establishing a seven-member independent citizens commission to set salaries for members of the general assembly, elected constitutional officers of the executive department, justices, and judges; establishing the appointment process for members of the independent citizens commission, and prohibiting members of the independent citizens commission from accepting gifts from lobbyists; prohibiting certain contributions, including contributions by corporations, to candidates for public office; prohibiting a member of the General Assembly from registering as a lobbyist until two (2) years after the expiration of his or her term; and establishing 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](#)

Stay Connected

Know of a potential ballot issue? E-mail the information to publicpolicycenter@uaex.edu.

You can find past newsletters and ballot issue fact sheets at

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



The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Smith-Lever Act, the law responsible for creating Extension.

To learn more about Extension's history and role in Arkansas, watch this [video](#).



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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