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June 13, 2014

NEWS & NOTES

Arkansas Ballot Issues

Signature Deadline Looming for Ballot Groups

Ballot measure groups have less than a month to collect signatures of support necessary to put their proposed laws in front of voters in November. July 7 is the deadline for groups to submit signature petitions to the Secretary of State's office.

Supporters of the Arkansas Hemp and Cannabis Amendment only received their ballot title approval this month and are rushing petitions out to as many locations as possible to collect the 78,133 signatures needed. Organizers are using Facebook to communicate statewide and posted their petition online for supporters to print off and circulate.

"We are very optimistic that this is what all of you have been waiting for. Just a thought if only 10k of the 1.2 million reg voters in Arkansas that wants this gets 10 Signatures that would give us the amount needed to be on the Ballot . So please be ready to make History," the Arkansans for Medical Cannabis Facebook page's June 5 post reads.

Ballot campaigns must collect 78,133 signatures for proposed constitutional amendments and 62,507 signatures for state laws.

Some proponents of ballot measures haven't circulated any petitions. David Dinwiddie said county officials should be the ones who circulate petitions for a measure extending elected county offices to four-year terms.

"I don't have the resources to go collect these signatures," he said in a recent interview about the ballot measure he submitted to the Attorney General's office. If the county officials are serious about the issue, Dinwiddie said, they will take on the challenge of signature gathering. He's unaware if anyone has.

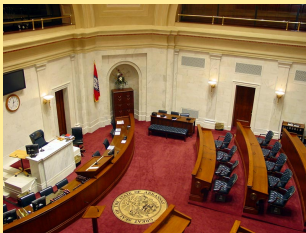
Two groups interested in seeing a change in the state's marriage laws [suspended](#) their signature gathering campaigns last month after Pulaski County Circuit Court Judge Chris Piazza struck down Amendment 83, a 2004 constitutional amendment that defined marriage as a union between one man and one woman. Piazza found the amendment unconstitutional because it discriminated against same-sex couples in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution. The state is appealing the ruling.

A complete list of ballot issues approved for signature gathering in Arkansas can be found below as are ballot measures referred to the public by the state legislature. 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?

Arkansans rejected the idea of free textbooks for children and a statewide ban on making and selling alcohol, while approving a 60-day session and \$6 a day wage for state legislators during the first vote on statewide ballot measures in 1912. Of seven proposed laws, voters approved three, including providing for recall of elected officials and authorizing cities and towns to issue bonds for public works. The recall and bond measures, however, were thrown out by the courts on technicalities during subsequent legal challenges.

Source: [Initiative & Referendum Institute](#) and the [American Political Science Review](#)



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 General Opinions

Read the latest Attorney General Opinions regarding proposed ballot issues.

[Read More](#)



Ballot Proposal News

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

[Read More](#)

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:

May 19, 2014 - A proposal to revoke federal drug laws and retroactively decriminalize the possession, cultivation and distribution of hemp or marijuana in Arkansas was rejected because of a long list of ambiguities in the proposed law. [Opinion No. 2014-048](#) is in response to The Willie Nelson Act, which was submitted by Richard Morton, a spokesman for the Arkansas Teapot Party.

Certified Measures - Approved for signature gathering:

Alcohol

- **May 19, 2014** - After several attempts, the "Arkansas Alcoholic Beverage Amendment" was approved for signature gathering. [Opinion No. 2014-049](#) certified the measure, which seeks to legalize the sale, manufacture and transport of alcohol statewide. Little Rock attorney David Couch of Little Rock submitted the constitutional amendment.

No website

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#)

County Office Terms

- **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.

No website

Marijuana

- **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.

Website: <http://arcompassion.com/>

[Ballot Question Committee Financial Report](#)

- **June 4, 2014** - A proposal to legalize the statewide cultivation, sale and possession of the cannabis plant and products derived from the plant was approved for signature gathering. [Opinion No. 2014-056](#) certified "The Arkansas Hemp and Cannabis Amendment," which was submitted by Robert L. Reed of Dennard.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/ARHCA14>

Minimum Wage

- **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.

Website: <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:

- "Group Withdraws from Medical Cannabis Effort" - [KNWA](#)
- "Arkansas voter ID law reinstated" - [Associated Press](#)

- "AG McDaniel Approves Ballot Title for All Wet Counties" - [Talk Business](#)
- "Medical 'pot' push strictly volunteer in 2014" - [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#)
- "Backers: Pay issue signings gathered" - [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#)
- "Pro-'pot' effort is step up in state" - [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#)
- "Minimum Wage Supporters To Seek Republican Endorsements" - [Talk Business](#)
- "Marijuana ballot title approved by Attorney General" - [City Wire](#)
- "Mixed opinions on Arkansas statewide alcohol sales" - [KTBS](#)
- "The grassroots campaign for legal marijuana" - [Arkansas Times](#)

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, unbiased 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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