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Oct. 28, 2014

NEWS & NOTES

Arkansas Ballot Issues

State Supreme Court OKs Minimum Wage Issue for Nov. 4 Ballot

Arkansans will vote on a proposal to increase the state's minimum wage after the State Supreme Court rejected a request to remove Issue 5 from the 2014 ballot.

Court justices ruled Monday that early petitions calling for the minimum wage issue to be put on the ballot contained the requisite number of voter signatures.

Ballot issue sponsors must submit a specific number of signatures, regardless if they are valid or not, to qualify for an additional 30 days from the Secretary of State's office to correct problems with petitions. Sponsors typically use that 30-day period to gather more signatures from voters to make up for illegible signatures or badly made copies of petitions that can disqualify dozens of signatures. It's only after those 30 days are up that the Secretary of State's office compares signatures against an official list of registered voters.

Challengers said the Secretary of State's office should have tossed some of the first batch of petition pages because the notary public's signature appeared to be forged. If those specific petitions had been set aside, the lawsuit alleged, sponsors wouldn't have had the requisite number of signatures to qualify for the 30 additional days.

State Supreme Court justices rejected the argument made by Jackson Stephens Jr's attorneys and said the petition pages appeared to meet the Secretary of State's initial requirements.

"The initial count is just that - an initial count of the signatures submitted at the time of filing and prior to any signature verification," the judges' court [opinion](#) states.

The court also rejected the lawsuit's challenge over the date on which the petitions were filed, just as they did for Issue 4 earlier this month. Court justices agreed with the Secretary of State that July 7 was a sufficient petition deadline because otherwise signatures would have been due on July 4, a day when state offices are closed.

Only one statewide ballot issue remains in court. But the lawsuit seeking to remove Issue 3, an ethics amendment, has stalled in Pulaski County Circuit Court.

"We are not anticipating anything before the election and have not heard from the plaintiffs since the last court filing. So, it should be on the ballot," said Mark Myers with the Secretary of State's Office on Tuesday.

The [Public Policy Center](#) will continue to follow these issues and keep you updated on the 2014 ballot measures.

2014 Arkansas Ballot Issue Fact Sheets

Want to know more about the ballot issues? The Public Policy Center has put together easy-to-read fact sheets on each issue that include both supporter and opponent viewpoints.

- [Issue No. 1](#) - An amendment empowering the General Assembly to provide for legislative committee review and approval of state agencies' administrative rules and Distribution.
- [Issue No. 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 percent of the valid signatures required.
- [Issue No. 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.
- [Issue No. 4](#) - The Arkansas Alcoholic Beverage Amendment.
- [Issue No. 5](#) - An Act to Increase the Arkansas Minimum Wage.

Contact your local county Extension office for paper copies of the fact sheets. We're also on YouTube. Watch our 8-minute [video](#) on the ballot issues or stay for a while longer and watch a 30-minute [discussion](#) on the state ballot issues recorded by AETN.

Have you taken our ballot issue survey yet?

The Public Policy Center is evaluating its ballot issue education program, including its newsletters and fact sheets. You can participate by [taking this quick and anonymous survey](#).



Legislative Ballot Issues

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

[Read More](#)

Ballot Issues From the People

Click here to find background on ballot proposals from the people as well as links to supporters and opponents.

[Read More](#)

Ballot Proposal News

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

[Read More](#)

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:

- "Issue 2 In November Election Would Add New Requirements To Petitioning" - [KUAF](#)
- "Election 2014: Ad Spending for Arkansas Ballot Measures Relatively Low" - [Associated Press](#)
- "Ads against alcohol sales statewide top \$1 million" - [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#)
- "3 other constitutional measures on ballot" - [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#)
- "Justices OK wage initiative for ballot" - [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#)

Background on Ballot Measures from the Legislature

[Issue 1 - An Amendment Empowering the General Assembly to Provide for Legislative Committee Review and Approval of State Agencies' Administrative Rules](#)

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Dismang](#)

There are no proponent or opposition groups registered with the Arkansas Ethics Commission specifically for this proposed ballot measure.

Additional Information:

[Legislative Impact Statement](#)

[Attorney General Opinion](#)

[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](#)

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Sample](#)

There are no proponent groups registered with the Arkansas Ethics Commission specifically for this proposed ballot measure.

Opponent Group(s)

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#) for Family Council Action Committee

[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](#)

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Sabin](#)

There are no proponent groups registered with the Arkansas Ethics Commission specifically for this proposed ballot measure.

Opponent Group(s)

["Arkansas Term Limits" website](#)

[Legislative Question Committee filing](#) for Arkansas Term Limits

[Ballot Question Committee filing](#) for Family Council Action Committee

[Legislative Question Committee filing](#) for US Term Limits

Background on Ballot Measures from the Public

[Issue 4 - Arkansas Alcoholic Beverage Amendment](#)

Read the Attorney General's Opinion certifying the measure at [Opinion No. 2014-049](#).

Ballot Issue Group

["Let Arkansas Decide" website](#)

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#) for Let Arkansas Decide

Opponent Group(s)

["Citizens for Local Rights" website](#)

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#) for Citizens for Local Rights/Let Local Communities Decide for Themselves

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#) for Arkansas Beverage Retailers Association

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#) for Conway County Line Liquor Association Fund

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#) for Family Council Action Committee

[Issue 5 - An Act to Increase the Arkansas Minimum Wage](#)

Read the Attorney General's Opinion certifying the measure at [Opinion No. 2013-156](#).

Ballot Issue Groups

["Give Arkansas A Raise Now" website](#)

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#) for Give Arkansas A Raise Now

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#) for Arkansas Interfaith Alliance

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#) for Give Us A Raise

[Ballot Question Committee Filing](#) for America Votes

Opponent Group(s)

There are no opposition groups registered with the Arkansas Ethics Commission specifically for this proposed ballot measure.

Looking Forward - 2016 Ballot

Attorney General Opinions

Approved for circulation

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.

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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