



Feb. 19, 2015

Ballot Deadline Passes for Legislature 40 Proposed Constitutional Amendments Filed

Over the next two months, legislators will work their way through dozens of proposed constitutional amendments to come up with the three issues they want to refer to voters in November 2016.

Proposals filed earlier this month ranged from changing court rules and procedures for civil claims, to requiring the presentation of identification when voting, to making county offices four-year terms. Bills also focused on the authority of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and the Highway Commission.

A proposal by Rep. Matthew Shepherd would end elections for high court justices and instead ask voters if they should be retained. If voters chose not to retain the justice, a commission would make recommendations and the governor would choose a new justice.

Legislators from the House and Senate filed a combined 40 bills before their early February deadline. The number is down to 39 now. [HJR1004](#) filed by Rep. Nate Bell was withdrawn. Bell had proposed an amendment to require that state funds expended in support of public education did not exceed a certain percentage of overall state expenditures. He withdrew the proposal on Feb. 12.

[A complete list](#) of the bills can be found below, along with [news articles](#) discussing some of the proposals. Some bills contain only basic information and aren't fleshed out yet. There are several proposals that are very similar and were filed by different legislators.

"As it stands right now, Sen. Williams and I are just working through the pile, trying to identify them, generally by category," Bell told the [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#). "And then it's at least my intent to go to people who may have very similar proposals and see if we can merge some of those proposals and have agreement that one of them will run."

Legislators this month also dealt with unfinished business from Issue 3 that voters approved in the 2014 general election. They [recognized](#) the Arkansas Ethics Commission's ability to provide advisory opinions and interpretations of Issue 3, which is now known as Amendment 94.

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

Be Ahead of the Curve - Discover 2016 Ballot Issue 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.

Did you know?

Every state allows the legislature to place a measure on the ballot. Every state except Delaware requires a popular vote to approve constitutional amendments.

Source: [Initiative & Referendum Institute](#)

Looking Forward - Potential 2016 Ballot Issues from the Public

Attorney General Opinions

The Attorney General is responsible for reviewing the language and titles of potential ballot issues submitted to voters by the public. Ballot issue groups can circulate petitions only after the Attorney General verifies that the ballot title and popular name honestly, intelligibly and fairly describe the purpose of a proposed constitutional amendment or act. The following are recent Attorney General opinions regarding potential ballot issues:

Rejected Ballot Proposals

Feb. 6, 2015 - An Act Concerning Local Option (Wet-Dry) Elections - A proposal to reduce the number of signatures needed from voters to put a wet-dry alcohol issue on the ballot was rejected because the definition of "legal voters" was not described, according to [Opinion No. 2015-014](#). David Couch of Little Rock submitted the measure.

Jan. 21, 2015 - The Campaign Finance Act of 2016 - The Attorney General's office again rejected a ballot measure that would create campaign spending disclosure requirements and instruct the state to ratify an amendment to the U.S. Constitution regarding campaign contributions. [Opinion No. 2015-001](#) said the text failed to define "electioneering communication" and that most people wouldn't understand the term. Paul J. Spencer, chair of Regnat Populus Ballot Question Committee in Scott, submitted the measure.

Jan. 14, 2015 - The Arkansas Privacy Protection Act - The title and text of a ballot measure regarding privacy of bank records, credit records, electronic records and other information in government data

bases, was rejected because it did not properly summarize the proposal's provisions. [Opinion No. 2014-142](#) also said the language was too vague. Raymond Redmon of Rison submitted the measure.

Ballot proposals approved for signature gathering

Feb. 3, 2015 - The Arkansas Alcoholic Beverage Amendment - A constitutional amendment to legalize the manufacturing and sale of alcohol statewide was certified for signature gathering, according to [Opinion No. 2015-12](#). David Couch of Little Rock submitted the measure.

Nov. 3, 2014 - The Arkansas Hemp and Marijuana Amendment - A constitutional amendment 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 constitutional amendment 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:

- ["Tim Griffin Pushes to Give Up Some Power as State's No. 2"](#) - Associated Press
- ["Independent Citizens Commission Would More Than Double Legislators' Pay"](#) - Associated Press
- ["Panel Advances Plan to Boost Arkansas Officials' Salaries"](#) - Associated Press
- ["Attorney General Approves Wording for Statewide Alcohol Proposal"](#) - Arkansas Business
- ["Proposed Amendment To Select Supreme Court Justices Filed"](#) - Talk Business & Politics
- ["Proposal Would Reinstate Arkansas Voter ID Requirement"](#) - Associated Press
- ["Nearly 40 Constitutional Amendment Proposals Filed"](#) - Talk Business & Politics
- ["Proposed Arkansas Constitutional Amendments Would Require Voter Photo ID"](#) - Arkansas News Bureau
- ["Rep. Files Proposed Amendment To State Constitution To Abolish Lt. Gov. Office"](#) - KFSM
- ["Arkansas Senate Votes To Abolish Lottery Commission"](#) - Arkansas News Bureau
- ["Plan for picking justices in state limits voter role"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
- ["40 proposals floated to alter constitution"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
- ["The 25-cent raise: What life is like after a minimum wage increase"](#) - The Washington Post

The 2015 Legislative Session & Proposed Ballot Issues

Legislators are able to refer up to three constitutional amendments to the voters every general election. The following are bills that have been filed in the legislative session:

HJR1002 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to Abolish the Fiscal Session of the General Assembly; and to Provide that the General Assembly Meet Every Two (2) Years

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Dan Douglas](#)

HJR1005 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning the Process for Selecting a Justice of the Supreme Court; and Amending Provisions Concerning Service on the Supreme Court

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Matthew Shepherd](#)

HJR1006 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to Define the Term "Infamous Crime" as Used in Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, Section 9

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. David Branscum](#)

HJR1007 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Requiring the Presentation of Certain Identification When Casting a Ballot

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Mark Lowery](#)

HJR1008 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to Allow the General Assembly to Determine the Manner of Publishing Notices Required by Various Sections of the Arkansas Constitution

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Mickey Gates](#)

HJR1009 - A Constitutional Amendment Authorizing the General Assembly to Enact Laws Concerning Rules of Pleading, Practice, and Procedures in Civil Cases

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Andy Davis](#)

HJR1010 - A Constitutional Amendment Concerning Court Rules and Procedures Applicable to Civil Claims

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Andy Davis](#)

HJR1011 - A Constitutional Amendment Authorizing the General Assembly to Enact Laws Regulating the Award of Damages in Civil Cases

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Andy Davis](#)

HJR1012 - A Constitutional Amendment Authorizing the General Assembly to Enact Laws Governing Elections in Which There is Only One Candidate for an Office

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Nate Bell](#)

HJR1013 - A Constitutional Amendment Concerning the Provision of an Adequate Education to Arkansas Students

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Nate Bell](#)

HJR1014 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning Judicial Procedures Pertaining to Civil Litigation

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jim Dotson](#)

HJR1015 - A Constitutional Amendment Concerning the Election of Judicial Department Officials

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jim Dotson](#)

HJR1016 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning the Judicial Branch of State Government

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jim Dotson](#)

HJR1017 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to Provide that the State Highway Commission Shall be Governed in the Same Manner as All Other State Agencies

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jim Dotson](#)

HJR1018 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning the Governance of State Agencies

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jim Dotson](#)

HJR1019 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to Provide that the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission Shall be Governed in the Same Manner as All Other State Agencies

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jim Dotson](#)

HJR1020 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning the Use of Voting by Mail at Elections

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Greg Leding](#)

HJR1021 - Proposing to Amend the Arkansas Constitution to Exempt Certain Tangible Personal Property from the Ad Valorem Tax

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Greg Leding](#)

HJR1022 - Proposing an Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning an Exemption from Property Taxes for Certain Veterans

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Charles Armstrong](#)

HJR1023 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning the Prosecution of Certain Alleged Offenses Committed by Public Servants

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Kim Hammer](#)

HJR1024 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning the Office of Lieutenant Governor

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Julie Mayberry](#)

HJR1025 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning the Elected Position of Lieutenant Governor; And Amending the Selection, Powers, and Duties of the Lieutenant Governor

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Julie Mayberry](#)

HJR1026 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to Abolish the Office of Lieutenant Governor on January 1, 2019

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Julie Mayberry](#)

HJR1027 - Proposing an Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning Elected County Officials

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jack Ladyman](#)

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

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

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

SJR2 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning Term Limits for Members of the General Assembly

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Alan Clark](#)

SJR3 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to Allow the Governor to Retain His or Her Powers and Duties When Absent from the State

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

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

SJR4 - A Constitutional Amendment Providing that Amendment 33, Section 2, Does Not Apply to a Board or Commission Charged with the Management or Control of a State-Supported Institution of Higher Education

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Jim Hendren](#)

SJR5 - Proposing an Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning Elected County Officials

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Bryan King](#)

SJR6 - A Constitutional Amendment to Allow Lottery Proceeds to be Used for Scholarships and Grants to Vocational-Technical Schools, Technical Institutes, and Technical Colleges Located Within the State of Arkansas

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Alan Clark](#)

SJR7 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning Voter Identification When Casting a Ballot in Person

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Bryan King](#)

SJR8 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning Court Procedures Applicable to Civil Litigation

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Bryan King](#)

SJR9 - A Constitutional Amendment to Reduce the Number of Days the General Assembly is in Session; and Repealing the Fiscal Session of the General Assembly

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Keith Ingram](#)

SJR10 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning Retirement Salary and Pension Funds for Municipal Police Officers and Municipal Firefighters

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Keith Ingram](#)

SJR11 - A Constitutional Amendment Concerning the Selection of Members of the Arkansas State Game and Fish Commission

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Bryan King](#)

SJR12 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning the Power of the General Assembly to Enact Certain Laws Pertaining to the Judicial Department of Government

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

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

SJR13 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Providing that Persons Elected to the Office of Sheriff Shall Serve a Term of Four (4) Years

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Bart Hester](#)

SJR14 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning Limitations on the Award of Punitive Damages in Civil Cases

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Jeremy Hutchinson](#)

SJR15 - A Constitutional Amendment Concerning Court Procedures Pertaining to Civil Claims

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. David Johnson](#)

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>



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- 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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U of A Division of Agriculture, 2301 South University, Little Rock, AR 72004

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