



June 16, 2015

Arkansans See Growing List of Issues from Public

The list of potential 2016 ballot issues is growing, with the Attorney General's approval of an eighth potential issue last week for signature gathering.

The Campaign Finance Act of 2016 would create new public disclosure requirements for certain election campaign spending information. It also would call upon Arkansas legislators at the state and federal level to support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution regarding who regulates campaign contributions. More details about the Campaign Finance Act of 2016 can be found in this [Attorney General's Opinion](#).

Other proposals circulating in the state seek to change or implement laws regarding the growth, sale and use of marijuana, alcohol sales, election requirements for legalizing alcohol sales, and the inclusion of gender identity and sexual orientation as a protected class under state law.

There's also a proposed referendum on Act 137, a new state law known as the Intrastate Commerce Improvement Act of 2015, which will prohibit local governments from passing ordinances or policies that create a protected classification or prohibit discrimination on a basis not contained in state law.

The Attorney General's Office is also reviewing a ballot title submitted last week for a constitutional amendment that would set term limits for state legislators at 10 years. The proposal comes after voters approved a change in term limits in 2014 to 16 years.

Only after the Attorney General approves a ballot title can a group seek signatures from the public to put an issue on the ballot.

Over the next few months, the Public Policy Center will research the referred ballot issues, and will publish fact sheets and other educational materials about the issues ahead of the November 2016 election.

We welcome your questions, which could be included in future ballot issue Q&As. Send us your question to publicpolicycenter@uaex.edu.

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 Issues

[Read up](#) on the three ballot issues referred by the legislature.



Attorney General Opinions

[Find out](#) what ballot issues are coming from the public and have been approved for signature gathering.



News About Ballot Issues

[Click here](#) for mentions of ballot issues or election law on news blogs and websites.

Did you know?

The number of signatures required to put an issue on the 2016 ballot is higher than it was in 2014.

Constitutional amendments require the signatures of at least 10 percent of the number of people who voted in the last governor's election, which would be nearly 85,000 signatures for the 2016 ballot.

Proposed acts require eight percent, which would be nearly 68,000 signatures.

Referendum groups must collect nearly 51,000 signatures, or six percent, for the issue to be on the 2016 ballot.

Source: [Official Results of the 2014 Election, Arkansas Secretary of State](#)

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

None since the last newsletter.

Ballot proposals approved for signature gathering

June 11, 2015 - The Campaign Finance Act of 2016 - A proposed state law that would create campaign spending disclosure requirements and instruct the state to ratify an amendment to the U.S. Constitution regarding campaign contributions was certified for signature gathering. However, [Opinion No. 2015-059](#) noted that the proposed ballot title "requires the voter to be an expert in campaign-finance regulation to understand what he or she is being asked to approve" and the Attorney General offered a longer ballot title that explained the six potential changes. Paul Spencer, chairman of the Regnat Populus Ballot Question Committee, submitted the measure.

April 23, 2015 - A Referendum to Approve or Reject the Arkansas Intrastate Commerce Improvement Act - A proposed referendum to approve or reject the act that prohibits a county or city from adopting or enforcing an ordinance, resolution, rule or policy that creates a protected class of people or prohibits discrimination on a basis not in state law was certified for signature gathering, according to [Opinion No. 2015-036](#). David Couch of Little Rock submitted the measure.

March 31, 2015 - An Act Amending The Arkansas Civil Rights Act of 1993 - A proposal to amend state law to include sexual orientation and gender identity to groups protected from discrimination under the Arkansas Civil Rights Act of 1993 was certified for signature gathering, according to [Opinion No. 2015-029](#). Jack Michael Weir III of Little Rock submitted the measure.

March 30, 2015 - An Act Concerning Local Option (Wet-Dry) Elections - A proposal to reduce the number of signatures required to call a local option (wet-dry) election from 38 percent of qualified electors to 20 percent of qualified electors was certified for signature gathering, according to [Opinion No. 2015-026](#). David Couch of Little Rock submitted the measure.

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:

- ["Groups seek tougher disclosure laws, oppose Citizens United"](#) - Arkansas News Bureau
- ["Chamber deals again ruled illegal"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
- ["Arkansas governor OKs \\$87 million incentive package for Lockheed Martin for site at Camden"](#) - Associated Press
- ["Lobbyists list spending \\$650,000 in '15 session"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
- ["Choosing Arkansas Judges: Elections or Selections?"](#) - Arkansas Business
- ["Group Files Proposal to Reinstate Shorter Legislative Term Limits"](#) - Arkansas Business
- ["Regnat Populus Proposal Approved By AG For Signature Gathering"](#) - Talk Business & Politics

Ballot Issues from the Legislature

Legislators are able to refer up to three constitutional amendments to the voters every general election. You can find the full text of each proposal and information about their sponsors below.

HJR1027 - Proposing an Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning The Terms, Election, And Eligibility of Elected Officials

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jack Ladyman](#)

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](#)

SJR16 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to Encourage Job Creation, Job Expansion, and Economic Development

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Jonathan Woods](#)

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>



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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