



May 13, 2015

Signature Collection Under Way for Ballot Issues

Multiple groups are in the process of collecting signatures to add their ballot issues to the November 2016 election.

One of those groups - Arkansans to Protect Local Rights - doesn't have very long to gather signatures from registered voters. The group is attempting to put Act 137 on the ballot to ask voters whether the law should be kept or discarded.

Act 137, known as [The Intrastate Commerce Improvement Act of 2015](#), prohibits local governments from passing ordinances or policies that create a protected classification or prohibits discrimination on a basis not contained in state law. The group has 90 days after the formal adjournment of the General Assembly to collect 51,000 signatures from registered voters across the state to put the issue up to a vote. Legislators adjourned April 22.

Petitions and ballot issue booths are popping up at local festivals across Arkansas. Seven groups have had ballot issue titles certified by the Attorney General's Office, which is required before signatures can be collected. The supporters are wanting 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.

More information about each of these potential ballot issues can be found by clicking [here](#). Unlike the group seeking a referendum on Act 137, supporters of these proposed ballot measures have until next summer to collect signatures.

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.



Festivals are a popular spot for collecting signatures to put issues on the ballot.

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?

Voters decided 146 propositions in November 2014, comprised of 100 legislative proposals, 35 initiatives, 4 referendums (votes to repeal an existing law), 5 advisory measures, and 2 other measures. The total number of 146 propositions is down 17% from the 176 propositions in November 2012, well below the recent high point of 235 propositions in 1998.

Sixty-nine percent of the of the propositions were approved last year. By a small margin, this is the highest approval rate in the 21st century: the next highest approval rate was 67% in 2002 and 2004.

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

April 13, 2015 - The Arkansas Industrial Hemp and Medical Cannabis Amendment- A proposed constitutional amendment that would legalize the cultivation, manufacturing, distribution, sale, possession and use of the cannabis plant and all products derived from the plant was rejected because of ambiguities in the ballot title. "The proposal refers to and defines "indust5rial" [sic] hemp and "medical" cannabis, but does not expressly restrict the substances' use to industry or medicine. The use of those modifiers introduces ambiguity about the uses that are intended to be permitted," according to [Opinion No. 2015-032](#). Robert L. Reed of Dennard submitted the measure.

April 16, 2015 - An Act Amending the Arkansas Civil Rights Act of 1993 - A proposal to amend state law to include sexual orientation, gender identity, age and veteran or military status to groups protected from discrimination under the Arkansas Civil Rights Act of 1993 was rejected because the title was the same as a previously approved ballot proposal that has not been withdrawn. The new proposal was also rejected because of ambiguities related to the phrase "veteran or military status," according to [Opinion No. 2015-035](#). Jack Michael Weir III of Little Rock submitted the measure.

May 1, 2015 - The Arkansas Industrial Hemp and Medical Cannabis Amendment - This proposed constitutional amendment was submitted and rejected again within a month time period. According to [Opinion No. 2015-041](#), the proposal was rejected again because of ambiguities similar to what was pointed out on April 13. Robert L. Reed of Dennard submitted the measure.

May 4, 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. 2015-042](#) said the ballot title doesn't indicate to voters a key proposed change in current law, and the title doesn't completely summarize the proposed measure. Paul J. Spencer, chairman of Regnat Populus Ballot Question Committee, of Little Rock submitted the measure.

Ballot proposals approved for signature gathering

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:

- "[Prosecuting attorneys to seek 23 percent pay raise](#)" - Arkansas News Bureau
- "[1-candidate election nets 110 ballots](#)" - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
- "[Arkansas Legislative Session Wraps With Plans to Reconvene at Governor's Request](#)" - Arkansas News Bureau
- "[AG ratifies title of anti-bias referendum](#)" - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
- "[Independent Citizens Commission Backs 23 Percent Pay Raise for Prosecutors](#)" - Associated Press
- "[Term-limits amendment proposal said in works](#)" - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
- "[Marijuana amendment ballot wording rejected](#)" - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
- "[Independent Citizens Commission Votes to Raise Prosecutors' Pay](#)" - Associated Press

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>

News & Notes Volume 4, Issue 5. This e-mail newsletter is shared with Cooperative Extension Service agents, subscribers from the general public and election officials or educators identified by the Public Policy Center. To unsubscribe, click below on "instant removal with SafeUnsubscribe."

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

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

[SafeUnsubscribe™ {recipient's email}](#)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Customer Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by khiggins@uaex.edu powered by



Try email marketing for free today!