



Sept. 14, 2015

Medical Marijuana Subject of Panel Discussion, Poll

Viewers of a Little Rock television station had the opportunity to watch a televised panel discussion about medical marijuana proposals that could wind up on the 2016 ballot.

KATV aired a discussion among supporters and opponents of medical marijuana, including backers of the Arkansas Medical Cannabis Act that are currently collecting signatures to put the issue on the November 2016 ballot.

The special town hall, which links to can be found below, aired the same day that a new [poll was released](#) showing support among Arkansas voters for medical marijuana. The August 2015 poll of 400 registered voters showed that 84 percent of participants agreed with legalizing marijuana for medical purposes.

"These numbers show overwhelming support for the basic concept of physician-prescribed, medical marijuana. However, the numbers change significantly when you ask voters about unlimited legal uses of marijuana or the ability to grow small amounts," said Roby Brock, Editor-in-Chief of Talk Business & Politics.

Arkansans appeared split on whether the use of marijuana should be legal or illegal - 51 percent said it should be illegal, while 42 percent said legal. Another 7 percent didn't know or didn't have an opinion, according to an analysis of the poll. Talk Business & Politics, Hendrix College and Impact Management Group partnered on the telephone survey.

Voters narrowly rejected a constitutional amendment in 2012 that would have legalized marijuana use for medicinal purposes. This current survey of Arkansas adults shows that the popularity of the concept of medical marijuana continues to grow three years after that close vote and suggests a return to the ballot of such a measure could meet a different fate, said Jay Barth, a political science professor at Hendrix College.

However, medical marijuana proposals in circulation this year differ on whether to allow people to grow their own marijuana. This provision could prove divisive for voters, Barth said, considering that 44 percent of survey participants agreed that adults should be allowed to grow small amounts of marijuana

for medical use while 51 percent disagreed.

Whether any medical marijuana proposal makes it to the 2016 ballot won't be known until next summer. Other petitions circulating in the state for the 2016 ballot include proposals regarding term limits, alcohol sales, election requirements for legalizing alcohol sales, and the inclusion of gender identity and sexual orientation as a protected class under state law.

Legislators have referred three constitutional amendments to voters. The language of those amendments can be found [below](#).

Over the next several months, the Public Policy Center will research all 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 citizen petitions 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?

School districts across the state are having their annual school board and millage elections tomorrow, Sept. 15, 2015. You can find your sample ballot at this [Arkansas Secretary of State website](#) by clicking on "Registration Information."

Looking Forward - Potential 2016 Ballot Issues from Citizens

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

Sept. 3, 2015 - Self-Defense, Weapons Carry, and Public Safety Amendment - A proposal that sought to protect the right of self-defense by declaring a right to openly carry weapons was rejected because the popular name could mislead voters and the ballot title did not summarize the proposal and give the scope of the proposed changes, according to [Opinion No. 2015-106](#). David Brennan of Searcy submitted the measure.

Aug. 17, 2015 - Curtail Amendments - A proposal that would reduce the number of constitutional amendments the state legislature could send to voters and to establish who could write ballot titles for legislative amendments was rejected because of ambiguities in the proposal's text, according to [Opinion No. 2015-091](#). Frederick N. Scott of the Little Red Hen Committee submitted the measure.

Ballot proposals approved for signature gathering

Sept. 8, 2015 - Reducing Constitutional Amendments Proposed by the General Assembly Under Article 19, Section 22 of the Arkansas Constitution - A proposal seeking to reduce the number of constitutional amendments the state legislature could send to voters was approved for signature gathering after a similar proposal (Curtain Amendments) was rejected in August. The proposal would allow legislators to send one constitutional amendment to the voters instead of three, according to [Opinion No. 2015-107](#). Frederick N. Scott of the Little Red Hen Committee submitted the measure.

Aug. 6, 2015 - Arkansas Term Limits Amendment of 2016 - A proposal to reduce the number of years a state senator or representative can serve in office was certified for signature gathering, according to [Opinion No. 2015-089](#). The proposal would repeal [Amendment 94](#), which voters passed in 2014 and set term limits of 16 years for members of the General Assembly. Brenda V. Taylor, an attorney in Fayetteville, submitted the measure.

July 24, 2015 - The Campaign Finance Act of 2016 - This [previously approved ballot proposal](#) to create campaign spending disclosure requirements was recertified after a new, less confusing ballot title was submitted. The Attorney General had said the original title would require the voter to be an expert in campaign-finance regulation to understand the proposed changes. The [newer version](#) was an attempt to better explain the effect of the measure. David Couch of Little Rock submitted the new version. Paul Spencer, chairman of the Regnat Populus Ballot Question Committee submitted the original 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, according to [Opinion No. 2014-079](#). 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:

- ["Poll: Support For Physician-Prescribed Marijuana Usage 84%"](#) - Talk Business & Politics
- KATV town hall on medical marijuana proposals
 - [Meet the Panel](#)
 - [Part 2](#)
 - [Part 3](#)
 - [Final Statements](#)
 - [Recap of town hall](#)
- ["Measure Would Limit Legislative Amendments to One"](#) - Talk Business & Politics
- ["Workers and Activists Plan Pay Protest Near Little Rock City Hall"](#) - KUAR

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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