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July 18, 2016

Get the Facts - 2016 Ballot Issue Information



Legislative Ballot Issues

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



Citizen Proposals

[Find out](#) what ballot issues have been submitted by citizens.



News About Ballot Issues

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

Medical Cannabis Act Qualifies for 2016 Ballot Three other groups submit signatures



Supporters of The Arkansas Medical Cannabis Act carry boxes of ballot issue petitions containing voter signatures into the Arkansas Capitol on June 20. The Secretary of State's Office has since determined the act will be on the General Election ballot.

Voters will have another say on whether Arkansas should legalize marijuana for medical purposes after the Secretary of State's Office declared that The Arkansas Medical Cannabis Act had enough voter signatures to put a proposed law on the November ballot.

The deadline to submit signatures for a proposed law or constitutional amendment was July 8. Supporters of The Arkansas Medical Cannabis Act turned in petitions weeks ahead of the deadline. On July 8, three more citizen groups submitted signatures for their issues.

A team of temporary workers are counting voter signatures now for:

- The Arkansas Medical Marijuana Amendment of 2016
- An Amendment to Allow Three Casinos to Operate in Arkansas, One Each in the Following Counties: Boone County, Operated by Arkansas Gaming and Resorts, LLC; Miller County, Operated by Miller County Gaming, LLC; and Washington County, Operated by Washington County Gaming LLC
- An Amendment to Limit Attorney Contingency Fees and Non-Economic Damages in Medical Lawsuits

Citizen groups need signatures from 84,859 voters representing at least 15 different counties to qualify a constitutional amendment for the ballot, and 67,887 signatures from 15 counties for proposed state laws.

The Secretary of State's Office has 30 days to review the hundreds of thousands of signatures submitted and to tell citizen groups whether their issue qualified for the ballot. If supporters come up short on the required number of signatures, they might qualify for a "cure" period where they can collect more voter signatures to add to their numbers.

Qualifying for the "cure" period will be harder this year because of [Amendment 93](#), which voters passed in 2014. The amendment requires 75 percent of the submitted signatures be valid before a group can get more time.

It may be the end of August before voters have a better idea of what issues qualify for the ballot. There's also the possibility that someone might sue in court to prevent an issue from being on the ballot.

Get engaged. Get informed.

The Public Policy Center will publish a voters guide and other educational materials in September about Arkansas' ballot issues.

In addition to the possibility of citizen group issues, legislators have referred three constitutional amendments to voters on the Nov. 8, 2016 ballot. The wording of the amendments can be found [below](#).

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.

Did you know?

Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee was attending the annual Southern Governors' Association meeting in Kentucky on Sept. 11, 2001. Because Huckabee was absent from the state, Lt. Gov. Win Rockefeller was acting governor. Huckabee was provided with a car, and under police escort drove to Nashville, Tenn., where he received federal clearance to fly back to Arkansas. He arrived at the Capitol just before 7 p.m.

(Issue 2 on this year's ballot would allow the governor to retain power when absent from the state.)

Source: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette archive

Looking Forward - Potential 2016 Ballot Issues from Citizens

Go Beyond the Ballot Title - Read the Full Proposal

Scroll to the bottom of these Attorney General opinions and you will find the complete wording of the proposed law or constitutional amendment. You can also find out who is supporting or opposing by looking at local-option/ballot/legislative question committee [filings](#) at the Arkansas Ethics Commission.

The Arkansas Medical Cannabis Act - [Opinion No. 2014-086](#) - A state law to make the medical use of marijuana legal under state law and establish a system regulating the cultivation, acquisition and distribution of medical marijuana.

[Arkansans for Compassionate Care 2016](#) has filed with the Arkansas Ethics Commission to support the proposal. [Coalition for Safer Arkansas Communities](#) and [Family Council Action Committee](#) have filed to oppose the measure.

The Arkansas Medical Marijuana Amendment of 2016 - [Opinion No. 2016-007](#) - A constitutional amendment to make the medical use of marijuana legal under state law and establish a system regulating the cultivation, acquisition and distribution of medical marijuana.

[Arkansans United for Medical Marijuana](#) has filed with the Arkansas Ethics Commission to support the proposal. [Coalition for Safer Arkansas Communities](#) and [Family Council Action Committee](#) have filed to oppose the measure.

An Amendment to Allow Three Casinos to Operate in Arkansas, One Each in the Following Counties: Boone County, Operated by Arkansas Gaming and Resorts, LLC; Miller County, Operated by Miller County Gaming, LLC; and Washington County, Operated by Washington County Gaming, LLC - [Opinion No. 2016-058](#) - A constitutional amendment that would allow gambling in Arkansas at certain locations.

[Arkansas Wins in 2016, LLC](#) and [Arkansas Winning Initiative, Inc.](#) have filed with the Arkansas Ethics Commission to support the proposal.

An Amendment to Limit Attorney Contingency Fees and Non-Economic Damages in Medical Lawsuits - [Opinion No. 2016-038](#) - A constitutional amendment that would define what an excessive medical-injury contingency fee is and prohibit the practice. The proposal also requires legislators to pass laws specifying a maximum dollar amount for "non-economic" damage awards, while the minimum could be \$250,000.

[Health Care Access for Arkansans](#) has filed with the Arkansas Ethics Commission to support the proposal. [Committee to Protect AR Families](#) has filed to oppose the measure.

Ballot Issues from the Legislature

Legislators are able to refer up to three constitutional amendments to the voters every general election. The three issues below will be on the November 8 ballot. You can find the full text of each proposal and information about their sponsors below.

Issue 1 - Proposing an Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning The Terms, Election, And Eligibility of Elected Officials (HJR1027)

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jack Ladyman](#)

[Coalition for Arkansas Election Reform](#) has filed with the Arkansas Ethics Commission to support the amendment.

Issue 2 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to Allow the Governor to Retain His or Her Powers and Duties When Absent from the State (SJR3)

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

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

Issue 3 - An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to Encourage Job Creation, Job Expansion, and Economic Development (SJR16)

Read the [Legislative bill](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Jonathan Woods](#)

[Jobs for Arkansas](#) has filed with the Arkansas Ethics Commission to support the amendment.

Ballot Issues In the News

["Medical marijuana proposal clears ballot hurdle"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

["Groups submit signatures in support of Arkansas ballot proposals"](#) - Arkansas News Bureau

["Signatures in for Second Medical Marijuana Initiative, Recreational Falls Short"](#) - KARK

["Supporters of rival medical-marijuana measures not backing down"](#) - Arkansas News Bureau

["Marijuana amendment organizer submits signatures, says it's likely more needed"](#) - Talk Business & Politics

["Initiative to shorten Arkansas legislators' term limits falls short of needed signatures"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

["Hundreds Paid to Gather Signatures for Arkansas Initiatives"](#) - Associated Press

["Secretary of State's Office Slogs Through Petition Verification Process"](#) - KUAR

["As Arkansas petitions flow in, 50 pore over names"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

["A look at 'What's next?' for proposed Arkansas ballot issues"](#) - Talk Business & Politics

["Not backing legal 'pot,' state Health Department says"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

["Foes file to fight jury-award caps in medical cases"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

["Medical marijuana: The one with the most votes wins ... probably"](#) - Talk Business & Politics

["Morton's nursing homes ante up"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

["Cherokee Nation gives \\$1M to support casino ballot issue"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

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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/ballot>



#ARballot

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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