



June 15, 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 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.

Signature Deadline Looming Over Citizen Groups

If you've gone to a festival lately, filled up your gas tank or even spent the day at the zoo, it's likely you've run into somebody asking you to sign a ballot issue petition. Citizen groups have less than a month to collect signatures to qualify their issues for the November ballot.

July 8 is the deadline to submit signatures to the Secretary of State's Office. This time next month, temporary workers will be poring over thousands of pages of petitions to see if those signatures match voter registration records.

For a number of reasons (see "Did you know?" below), many signatures will be tossed. Some groups will qualify right away. Others will be a little short but get 30 more days to collect additional signatures. Some groups might not be close and decide not to turn in any signatures.

Here's a quick recap of the potential [issues](#):

- Allowing certain casinos in three counties (this is new - was just approved this month)
- Legalizing medical marijuana (there are two different proposals)
- Legalizing marijuana, among other things
- Defining and prohibiting excessive medical injury fees & setting a maximum amount for damages
- Reducing the number of years legislators can serve

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.

Qualifying for the 30 additional days to collect signatures 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.

Get engaged. Get informed.

The Public Policy Center will publish fact sheets 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?

Before workers in the Secretary of State's Office counts vote signatures for a ballot issue, they look for any that are invalid. Here are some reasons a signature isn't counted:

- The person wasn't a registered voter at the time he or she signed the petition
- Election officials could not read the person's signature and he or she didn't provide additional identifying info (such as a birth date or address)
- The petition wasn't signed by the person collecting the signatures
- The petition is a photocopy

Source: [Arkansas Secretary of State's Office](#)

Looking Forward - Potential 2016 Ballot Issues from Citizens

In order to be on the November 2016 ballot, citizen groups had to publish a legal advertisement in the newspaper containing their proposed ballot title by July 8, 2016. The following groups met the deadline to publish their proposal and are currently collecting signatures from voters.

Attorney General opinions contain the wording of the proposed issue's ballot title. Proposals are listed in the order that they were approved by the Attorney General's Office for signature gathering, newest to oldest.

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 - A proposal that would allow gambling in Arkansas at certain locations was approved for signature gathering according to [Opinion No. 2016-058](#). Cal McCastlain, an attorney with Dover Dixon Horne PLLC of Little Rock, submitted the measure.

The Arkansas Cannabis Amendment - A proposal to legalize the cultivation, production, distribution, sale, possession and use of the cannabis plant and products derived from the plant was approved for

signature gathering, according to [Opinion No. 2016-039](#). Mary L. Berry of Summit submitted the measure.

An Amendment to Limit Attorney Contingency Fees and Non-Economic Damages in Medical Lawsuits - A proposed amendment that would define what an excessive medical-injury contingency fee is and prohibit the practice was approved for signature gathering, according to [Opinion No. 2016-038](#). 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. Former Rep. Daniel Greenberg of Little Rock submitted the measure.

The Arkansas Medical Marijuana Amendment of 2016 - A proposal to make the medical use of marijuana legal under state law and establish a system regulating the cultivation, acquisition and distribution of medical marijuana was approved for signature gathering. In [Opinion No. 2016-007](#), the Attorney General cautioned 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." David Couch of Little Rock submitted the measure.

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.

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.

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](#)

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](#)

Ballot Issues In the News

["Poll: Most Arkansans support campaign finance reforms"](#) - Talk Business & Politics
["Arkansas panel considers pay raises for elected officials"](#) - Arkansas News Bureau
["Justices urged to toss ballot-initiative claim"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
["Arkansas court rejects lawsuit over campaign finance measure"](#) - Associated Press
["Could medical marijuana become legal in the Natural State"](#) - KATV
["Medical Marijuana Activist Upset Some Food Festival Goers"](#) - Fox16
["Hutchinson puts his pen to roads plan"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
["Repeal fiscal sessions, Northwest Arkansas lawmakers say"](#) - Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
["No Easy Options for Arkansas' Long-Term Road Plan"](#) - Associated Press
["Three casinos get attorney general's OK for Arkansas ballot, signature gathering begins"](#) - Talk Business & Politics
["Lawmakers Face Growing To-Do List for '17 Session"](#) - Associated Press
["Appeals court upholds dismissal of steel mill lawsuit"](#) - Associated Press
["Deadline Passes For Marijuana Proposals"](#) - Arkansas Matters
["5 ballot ideas printed, meet state deadline"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
["3rd 'pot' measure meets deadline"](#) - Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
["Casino proposal has one month to gather signatures"](#) - KATV
["Attorney David Couch Wields Initiatives To Change the Law"](#) - Arkansas Business
["Month-Long Spring Beings for Petition Signatures"](#) - Associated Press
["Medical Malpractice Proposal Seeks Out Public Vote"](#) - Arkansas Business
["Ballot backers at odds over canvassers"](#) - 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, unbiased 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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