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2018 Ballot Issue Spending Underway

Spending on 2017 statewide ballot measures across the United States is on pace to surpass the total amount of expenditures in 2015. [Ballotpedia](#) has tracked approximately \$31.25 million in contributions to campaigns involved in the 23 ballot measures certified for the 2017 ballot. The majority of that money is being spent on four citizen measures in Ohio, Maine and New York.

Arkansas doesn't have any ballot measures this year, but [Legislative Question Committees](#) are starting to form and raise money on 2018 ballot measures in the Natural State.

In July, [Protect AR Families](#) formed to advocate against [SJR8](#), a constitutional amendment referred by the legislature that seeks to establish limits on how much money can be awarded in some types of lawsuits and would give legislators with the authority to set court rules.

As of Aug. 15, Protect AR Families has raised \$163,974 for its efforts. A similar group formed in June called [Liberty Defense Network](#). In filings with the Arkansas Ethics Commission, Liberty Defense Network reported raising \$109,000 and spending \$82,045 of that already on polling data, consulting and a website.

Arkansas' 2016 legislative measures attracted \$438,920 in campaign spending, with most of that money spent in support of [Issue 3](#) (An Amendment to the Arkansas Constitution Concerning Job Creation, Job Expansion, and Economic Development).

It's likely more money will be raised and spent on Arkansas' two ballot measures from the legislature than the three legislative issues in 2016.

More than \$2 million was spent on Arkansas' citizen-initiated [medical marijuana amendment](#) campaign. That \$2 million was part of about \$1 billion in contributions to ballot measure campaigns nationwide in 2016, according to [Ballotpedia](#). Citizen initiatives and veto referendums pulled in more than \$936 million in contributions in 2016 across the country.

As of August, only one citizen group has approval from the [Attorney General](#) to collect signatures for a potential 2018 ballot measure. It involves term limits. The deadline for citizen-led proposals is not until next summer.

Get Engaged. Get Informed.

The [Public Policy Center](#) has published nonpartisan fact sheets on Arkansas' statewide ballot issues since 2004. We welcome your questions at publicpolicycenter@uaex.edu. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Did you know?

Voters in Baxter County go the polls Sept. 12, 2017. They are voting on a temporary county-wide sales tax and a permanent county-wide sales tax for the county jail. The two countywide sales taxes are separate from a Mountain Home tax proposal also on the ballot that day. You can find a Public Policy Center fact sheet on the Baxter County sales tax election at <https://uaex.edu/business-communities/voter-education/local-ballot-issues.aspx>.

Legislative Ballot Issues



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Legislators are able to refer up to three constitutional amendments to the voters every general election. These two proposals will be on the Nov. 6, 2018 ballot.

SJR8 - An Amendment Concerning Civil Lawsuits and the Powers of the General Assembly and Supreme Court to Adopt Court Rules.

Read [SJR8](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Missy Irvin](#)

HJR1016 - A Constitutional Amendment Adding as a Qualification to Vote that a Voter Present Certain Valid Photographic Identification When Casting a Ballot In Person or Casting an Absentee Ballot.

Read [HJR1016](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Robin Lundstrum](#)

Looking Forward - Potential 2018 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:

Ballot proposals rejected

Aug. 4, 2017 - The Arkansas Recreational Marijuana Amendment - A proposal seeking to legalize the cultivation, production, distribution, sale, possession and use of marijuana and products for recreational purposes was rejected without comment, according to [Opinion No. 2017-084](#). Attorney General Leslie Rutledge wrote that the proposal was nearly identical to one she rejected July 21 from a different individual and that the two authors needed to submit a single proposal for her office's review. Mary L. Berry of Summit submitted the measure.

July 21, 2017 - The Arkansas Recreational Marijuana Amendment of 2018 - A proposal seeking to legalize the cultivation, production, distribution, sale, possession and use of marijuana and products produced from it for recreational purposes was rejected because of ambiguities in the text of the proposal, according to [Opinion No. 2017-081](#). Larry B. Morris of West Fork submitted the measure.

Ballot proposals approved for signature gathering

Oct. 28, 2016 - Arkansas Term Limits Amendment - 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. 2016-105](#). The proposal would institute six-year terms for representatives and eight-year terms for senators, with a maximum of 10 years total. The proposal would return Arkansas' term limits to what they were before a voter-approved change in 2014 that extended terms. Thomas Steele of Little Rock submitted the measure.

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>



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.

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