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Dec. 19, 2017

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What Does 2018 Have in Store for Voters?

As 2017 winds down, we offer a recap of where Arkansas' 2018 ballot stands as far as potential constitutional amendments:

Ballot Issues From the Public

- Petitioners were out this past week asking holiday shoppers in Little Rock for their signatures to help put the [Arkansas Term Limits Amendment](#) on the 2018 ballot. This group is still the only initiative from the public certified by the Attorney General to collect voter signatures for the 2018 ballot. They have reported \$5,500 in contributions received and \$6,215 in expenses.
- The deadline to submit voter signatures to the Secretary of State's Office for the November 2018 election is July 6, although campaigns have to first publish their ballot measure in a newspaper by June 6. This means any other group seeking the 2018 ballot will have to submit a ballot title to the Attorney General for approval and collect voter signatures in the next six to seven months.

Ballot Issues From the Legislature

- Voters will decide the fate of two constitutional amendments proposed by the legislature.
- Ballot issue groups on opposing sides of [SJR8](#) have raised a combined \$1.67 million for their campaigns, according to financial reports filed with the [Arkansas Ethics Commission](#). This ballot measure seeks to establish a dollar limit for financial damages awarded in certain types of lawsuits, shift authority from the state supreme court to the legislature in setting court rules and procedures, and limit how much attorneys are paid in medical injury lawsuits. Supporters of these types of laws often use the phrase "tort reform" when talking about them.
- As of December, no one has filed with the Arkansas Ethics Commission to indicate they would be raising money on campaigns for or against [HJR1016](#), which would add a requirement in the state constitution that Arkansans must present photo identification when voting in person or through absentee ballot.

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?

One hundred years ago, Arkansas became the first "non-suffrage state" to allow women to vote in the Arkansas primary elections in 1917. The year also saw women working toward placing a constitutional amendment on Arkansas' 1920 ballot to secure their access to all elections.

The Arkansas Women's Suffrage Centennial Project is commemorating the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in Arkansas through a number of methods, including a [virtual exhibit](#) through UA Little Rock's Center for Arkansas History and Culture that explores the women's suffrage movement in the state.

Source: [UA Little Rock Center for Arkansas History and Culture](#)

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

No proposals have been rejected since the November 2017 ballot issue newsletter.

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>



#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.

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