



Feb. 14, 2017

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Voter ID, "Tort Reform" Among 31 Ballot Proposals Filed

Arkansas legislators filed 31 proposed constitutional amendments for the 2018 ballot. Limited by law to a maximum of three measures, legislators will quickly whittle the list down in committee meetings in coming weeks.

Based on the number of co-sponsors, there are a few proposals most likely to make it through the committee process legislators told the [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette](#). The proposals include:

- [Monetary limits on medical-injury lawsuits and control of Supreme Court practices](#). (This type of law is often referred to as "tort reform.")
- [Requirements to show photo identification when voting](#).
- [Deadlines for legal challenges of proposed ballot issues](#).

The number of bills is less than the 40 filed for the 2016 ballot. Several of the proposals are shell bills, in that there is only a title. Shell bills are typically fleshed out at a later time. Some of the bills are similar, dealing with access to education, changes to the ballot issue process, and the method for selecting Supreme Court justices.

A full list of the 31 proposals can be [found below](#). In an interview with the newspaper, legislators from both houses said they wanted committees to review the bills this week and narrow them down for a full vote. The House and the Senate expect to refer one proposal each. A third proposal might be agreed to at a later date this session.

The 91st General Assembly is expected to wrap up by April 7, according to a resolution filed Monday, with the official last day of the session being May 5.

Did you know?

The Arkansas Attorney General's Office launched a new website this month at [arkansasag.gov](#). The website is where you can find the titles of ballot measures proposed by citizens. The attorney general

reviews each ballot title and must approve it and the full text of the proposal before supporters can gather voter signatures. [Click here](#) to read recent AG ballot issue-related opinions.

Source: Arkansas State Legislature

The 2017 Legislative Session & Proposed Ballot Issues



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Arkansas legislators submitted 31 proposed constitutional amendments by the Feb. 8 deadline.

House Proposals

[20 total](#)

Senate Proposals

[11 total](#)

Legislators are able to refer up to three constitutional amendments to the voters every general election. The following are bills that were filed in the current legislative session:

From the Senate:

SJR1 - A constitutional amendment to reduce the number of days the General Assembly is in session; and repealing the fiscal session of the General Session.

Read [SJR1](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Jim Hendren](#)

SJR3 - The Public Education Partnership Amendment of 2018.

Read [SJR3](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Blake Johnson](#)

SJR4 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution concerning the appointment of justices of the Supreme Court by the governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate.

Read [SJR4](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Jeremy Hutchinson](#)

SJR5 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution providing that the General Assembly shall be the sole and exclusive evaluator of whether the system of free public schools satisfies the Arkansas Constitution.

Read [SJR5](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Alan Clark](#)

SJR6 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution concerning voter identification when casting a ballot in person.

Read [SJR6](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Bryan King](#)

SJR8 - A constitutional amendment limiting contingency fees and awards of punitive and non-economic damages; and changing the powers of the General Assembly and the Supreme Court regarding rules of pleading, practice, and procedure.

Read [SJR8](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Missy Irvin](#)

SJR10 - Amending the Arkansas Constitution to revise the process for the General Assembly to submit proposed amendments to the Arkansas Constitution to the electors of the state at a General Election.

Read [SJR10](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Collins-Smith](#)

SJR11 - A proposed constitutional amendment creating the Board of Pardons for the purpose of granting pardons after convictions; and providing that a person may apply for a pardon from either the governor or the Board of Pardons.

Read [SJR11](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Bryan King](#)

SJR12 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution concerning court decisions pertaining to initiatives and referendums under Arkansas Constitution Article 5, § 1.

Read [SJR12](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Jim Hendren](#)

SJR13 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution concerning awards in civil actions.

Read [SJR13](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Bruce Maloch](#)

SJR14 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution concerning retirement salary and pension funds for municipal police officers and municipal firefighters.

Read [SJR14](#)

Sponsor: [Sen. Keith Ingram](#)



House website

From the House:

HJR1002 - A proposed amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to provide for the appointment of emergency interim successors to certain constitutional offices upon the occurrence of a catastrophic event.

Read [HJR1002](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Stephen Meeks](#)

HJR1003 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to amend the process for placing proposed measures and constitutional amendments on the ballot for consideration by voters at an election.

Read [HJR1003](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jeremy Gillam](#)

HJR1004 - An amendment to Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, Section 1, concerning the filing of initiative petitions and the process for challenging the sufficiency of a petition.

Read [HJR1004](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Gred Leding](#)

HJR1005 - The Public Education Partnership Amendment of 2018.

Read [HJR1005](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Mark Lowery](#)

HJR1006 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution repealing the fiscal session of the General Assembly and providing that an appropriation by the General Assembly not be for a longer period than two (2) years.

Read [HJR1006](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Kim Hendren](#)

HJR1007 - A proposed amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to require that constitutional amendments proposed by the General Assembly contain a ballot title that is subject to the same standard of review applied to constitutional amendments initiated by the people of this state.

Read [HJR1007](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Kim Hendren](#)

HJR1008 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to provide that the State Highway Commission shall be governed in the same manner as all other state agencies.

Read [HJR1008](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jim Dotson](#)

HJR1009 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution concerning legislative oversight of institutions of higher education and higher education offerings in the state of Arkansas.

Read [HJR1009](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jim Dotson](#)

HJR1010 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution concerning the funding of public education offered to the citizens of the state of Arkansas.

Read [HJR1010](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jim Dotson](#)

HJR1011 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution concerning the applicability of Arkansas Constitution, Amendment 33, to institutions of higher learning.

Read [HJR1011](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Trevor Drown](#)

HJR1012 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to revise the method of selection of justices of the Supreme Court.

Read [HJR1012](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Matthew Shepherd](#)

HJR1013 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution revising the process for submitting proposed measures and constitutional amendments to voters for approval or rejection.

Read [HJR1013](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Bob Ballinger](#)

HJR1014 - A proposed amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to provide that the rates for sales and use taxes shall be increased only upon voter approval or a two-thirds (2/3) vote of each house of the General Assembly.

Read [HJR1014](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Andy Mayberry](#)

HJR1015 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution providing that amendments to the Arkansas Constitution shall not specifically bestow powers, privileges, or authority to specific individuals or private business entities identified by name.

Read [HJR1015](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Andy Mayberry](#)

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](#)

HJR1017 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to provide additional rights for crime victims and a mechanism for the enforcement of those rights.

Read [HJR1017](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Charlotte Douglas](#)

HJR1018 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution concerning civil actions and court procedures.

Read [HJR1018](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Matthew Shepherd](#)

HJR1019 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution concerning awards in civil actions.

Read [HJR1019](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jimmy Gazaway](#)

HJR1020 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution to repeal the fiscal session of the General Assembly and to provide for annual regular sessions of the General Assembly.

Read [HJR1020](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Andy Davis](#)

HJR1021 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution providing that a monument or statue shall not be placed upon the state Capitol grounds unless at least two hundred thousand (200,000) qualified electors of the state sign a petition in favor of the placement.

Read [HJR1021](#)

Sponsor: [Rep. Jim Sorvillo](#)

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

Jan. 19, 2017 - An amendment to the Arkansas Constitution legalizing gambling with the sales and service of open alcoholic beverages as a local ballot measure - A proposal to allow a company to initiate a local election to allow a casino was rejected because of ambiguities in the ballot title and the description of how the amendment would go into effect if approved by voters, according to [Opinion No. 2017-001](#).

This is the fourth time this proposal has been rejected. See [Opinion No. 2016-133](#) (Dec. 27, 2016), [Opinion No. 2016-109](#) (Nov. 7, 2016) and [Opinion No. 2016-099](#) (Oct. 10, 2016). Barry Emigh of Hot Springs submitted the measure.

Feb. 10, 2017 - Arkansas Cannabis Hemp and Recreational Marijuana Amendment - Four proposals by the same name seeking to legalize the cultivation, production, distribution, sale, possession and use of the cannabis plant and products derived from it were rejected because of conflicting definitions and because the inclusion of federal action goes beyond the scope of the state constitution according to Opinions No. [2017-010](#), [2017-011](#), [2017-012](#), and [2017-014](#). Mary L. Berry of Summit, Avalon Romane of West Fork, Larry Morris of West Fork and Jason D. Berry of Summit submitted the identical proposals.

Mary L. Berry's proposal was previously rejected in [Opinion No. 2017-006](#) (Jan. 24, 2017). The proposal is similar to a previous measure submitted under the name Arkansas Cannabis Amendment. That ballot title request was rejected seven times.

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 repeal Amendment 94, which voters passed in 2014 and extended term limits to 16 years for members of the General Assembly. Thomas Steele of Little Rock submitted the October 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.

University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture - <http://www.uaex.edu>

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