

# Arkansas Groups Submit Signatures for Cannabis, Casino Proposals

## Arkansas Voters May Decide on Medical Cannabis Expansion and Casino License Repeal

**LOS ANGELES** — Supporters of proposals to expand Arkansas' medical cannabis program and repeal a casino license have submitted thousands of signatures in a bid to place these measures on the November ballot.

### Initiative Signatures and Verification Process

Initiative organizers, including those aiming to modify the state's abortion ban, assert they have collected enough signatures to qualify. However, groups advocating for education reform, government transparency, and a proposal to exempt feminine hygiene products and diapers from sales taxes did not meet the required numbers.

Election workers will spend the coming weeks verifying the signatures. Proposed constitutional amendments need at least 90,704 valid signatures from registered voters and a minimum number of signatures from 50 out of the state's 75 counties. The Arkansas Secretary of State's office has hired 90 temporary workers to assist with the signature verification process. If verified, the groups behind the measures could qualify for an additional 30 days to gather more signatures if they meet at least 75% of the required numbers.

### Medical Cannabis Proposal

The medical cannabis proposal seeks to expand the measure approved by voters in 2016. Changes include broadening the definition of medical professionals who can certify patients for medical cannabis. Arkansans for Patient Access, the group behind the proposal, reported gathering over 111,000 signatures.

"Our canvassers found voters eager to place an amendment on the ballot that will eliminate barriers to access and make it less expensive to acquire and keep a medical cannabis card," said Bill Paschall from Arkansans for Patient Access.

### Casino License Repeal

Another significant measure aims to block a license for a Pope County casino, which has been mired in legal challenges for years. Pope County was one of four sites approved for casinos under a 2018 constitutional amendment. The group advocating for this repeal stated they collected over 162,000 signatures.

### Potential Legal Challenges

Even if the signatures are verified, the initiatives may still face legal challenges. The Family Council Action Committee has expressed its intent to challenge the [cannabis](#) and abortion measures if they make it to the ballot.

## **Other Proposals**

Several other proposals did not gather enough signatures to qualify for the ballot. These include initiatives to:

- Require schools receiving public funding to adhere to the same standards as traditional public schools.
- Strengthen public access to government records and meetings.
- Exempt feminine hygiene products and diapers from sales taxes.

## **Background and Future Implications**

Arkansas activists behind the cannabis initiative have submitted 111,402 signatures, needing 90,704 valid signatures from 50 counties to qualify. The proposal aims to expand the state's existing medical cannabis program and includes a trigger provision that would end cannabis prohibition if the federal government enacts legalization.

Since its implementation in 2019, the state's medical cannabis program has registered over 102,000 patients. A recent law allows medical cannabis patients to obtain concealed carry licenses for firearms.

Arkansas voters previously rejected a broader legalization measure for cannabis in 2022. The upcoming decisions on these proposed amendments will significantly impact the state's legal landscape and could pave the way for future legislative changes.

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