



SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

YOUR GUIDE TO THE 2024 ELECTION BALLOT INITIATIVES

*A nonpartisan guide to help understand how
the 2024 ballot initiatives affects families.*

Prepared by University of Maryland Council on Family Relations
and PhD students in Maryland Family Policy Impact Seminar.



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(01)

ADDICTION

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Z

- Addiction-related ballot measures reflect growing public concern about drug use, crime, and mental health across the US.
- Measures address issues ranging from harsher penalties for drug crimes to alternative treatments for addiction and mental health disorders.
- The outcomes of these measures will shape state-level drug policy and also national conversations about public safety, criminal justice reform, and healthcare for those struggling with addiction.

SOURCE DATA LISTED IN **RESOURCES** SECTION

ARIZONA PROP. 312

Arizona Proposition 312 (2024) would allow property owners to apply for a refund from their most recent property tax payment if the local government repeatedly fails to enforce laws prohibiting illegal activities like camping, loitering, and public nuisances. A "yes" vote supports the right to apply for refunds, matching the costs incurred by property owners to address these issues, with the ability to roll over claims if costs exceed the tax bill. A "no" vote retains the current property tax laws and regulations without the option for such refunds.

KEY POINTS

Arizona Proposition 312 would let property owners get a tax refund if local governments don't enforce laws about things like illegal camping and loitering. Supporters say it helps property owners and holds the government responsible, while opponents worry it takes money away from efforts to fix homelessness.

SUPPORT

Supporters believe this measure helps people who say they are paying for damage caused by issues like homelessness.¹ They say it will make the government do a better job of keeping communities safe and clean.² Supporters include Arizona State Senators Warren Petersen (R) and Justine Wadsack (R), Arizona State Representative Ben Toma (R), and the Goldwater Institute.

OPPOSITION

Opponents think the measure will take away money that could be used to help homeless people by building shelters.³⁻⁴ They want local governments and charities to work together to solve the homelessness problem.⁴ Opponents include Arizona State Officials Denise Epstein (D) and Brian Fernandez (D), Arizona State Senator Priya Sundarshan (D), the Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, and the League of Arizona Cities and Towns.



YES VOTE

Allows property owners to get a tax refund if local governments fail to enforce laws about public nuisances, like illegal camping and loitering.



NO VOTE

Keeps the current laws and prevents tax refunds, ensuring that funding for services like homelessness programs remains unchanged.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

In areas with higher homeless populations, local businesses can lose money or face property damage. Homelessness affects not just those experiencing it but also the surrounding community. Businesses might have to pay for repairs and cleanup, while families worry about neighborhood safety.

Homelessness also affects the health of people and their families. It happens because of poverty, not enough low-cost housing, and lack of help for people who need housing. Other causes include not having affordable healthcare, domestic violence, mental illness, and addiction.⁵ Homelessness makes it harder to get healthcare and leads to more health problems, severe illness, and even death.⁶ In January 2023, Arizona had about 14,237 homeless people⁷, which has grown since 2020.⁸ In many places, activities like camping, sleeping in public, and asking for money are illegal, which can lead to homeless people getting criminal records, making it harder for them to get jobs or housing.⁹



KEY POINTS

SUPPORT

Several groups are supporting the proposition, including the District Attorney's office, Californians for Safer Communities, the Republican Party of California, law enforcement agencies, and major retailers like Walmart, Target, and Walgreens.[10] By advocating for harsher penalties, these groups appeal to a growing concern about the apparent rise in crime rates across the state. [11] Stricter laws and tougher enforcement are framed as a critical measure to protect public safety.

OPPOSITION

Groups opposing Proposition 36 include the California Democratic Party, ACLU of Northern California, Anti-Recidivism Coalition, Vera Institute of Justice, and the League of Women Voters of California. These groups argue that increasing incarceration and implementing harsher punishments disproportionately target Black, Brown and economically disadvantaged communities, which are often overrepresented in California's criminal justice system.[12] Additionally, they point out that California lacks sufficient treatment centers to effectively implement the treatment-mandated felony proposed in the bill.[13]

CALIFORNIA PROP. 36

California Proposition 36 (2024) would enhance penalties for certain drug offenses by increasing sentence lengths and level of crime. A "yes" vote would classify certain drug offenses as treatment-mandated felonies, increase sentence lengths and level of crime, and require courts to warn individuals convicted of distributing illegal drugs of their potential future criminal liability. A "no" vote maintains current law and keeps certain drug and theft crimes as misdemeanors.



YES VOTE

Penalties for certain drug offenses would increase by extending sentence durations and elevating the severity of the crime



NO VOTE

Maintains current law and keeps certain drug and theft crimes as misdemeanors

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The proposal appeals to families concerned about safety in public spaces, retail stores, and within their communities, painting a picture of increased risk due to the prevalence of drugs and crime. If families don't feel safe, it can limit their ability to shop, spend time together, and enjoy their daily lives. Also, the treatment-mandated aspect of the bill could have positive effects on public health by increasing access to rehabilitation.

MASSACHUSETTS QUESTION 4

Massachusetts Question 4 (2024) would allow persons aged 21 and older to grow, possess, and use certain natural psychedelic substances in certain circumstances. A "Yes" vote would create a Natural Psychedelic Substances Commission and Advisory Board to regulate the licensing of psychedelic substances to individuals 21 years of age or older, and authorize individuals 21 years of age or older to grow, possess, and use a personal amount of psychedelic substances. A "no" vote opposes this initiative and retains the current regulations surrounding psychedelic substances.

KEY POINTS

SUPPORT

The bill has garnered support from several organizations, including Massachusetts for Mental Health Options, the New Approach Advocacy Fund, and Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps. [15] Advocates emphasize the need to regulate access to what they describe as natural, effective treatments for depression and anxiety, particularly in light of the ongoing mental health crisis in the country. Veterans are highlighted as a group in dire need of alternative treatments, and supporters argue that this bill could provide the legal framework to expand resources for those struggling.[15]

OPPOSITION

The bill has faced opposition from the Coalition for Safe Communities, a group that includes medical and mental health professionals, veterans, and recovery organizations. This coalition argues that the bill moves too quickly in normalizing the use of psychedelics, raising concerns about its potential risks.[16] While they do not dispute the potential medical benefits of psychedelics, they take issue with certain aspects of the bill, particularly the provision that allows for home cultivation. Opponents argue that this could be easily exploited, potentially creating a black market that would make it difficult to regulate who is using and distributing the substances.[16]



YES VOTE

Allows persons aged 21 and older to grow, possess, and use certain natural psychedelic substances in certain circumstances



NO VOTE

Opposes this initiative and retains the current regulations surrounding psychedelic substances.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

This bill emphasizes personal and community safety regarding psychedelic drugs by establishing an oversight body to manage their legalization. The governing body would include officials such as the treasurer, governor, and attorney general. The Commission would be responsible for setting regulations on licensing qualifications, security, record-keeping, education and training, health and safety standards, testing, and age verification. The inclusion of a 21-and-over clause ensures that only those legally permitted will have access to the drug, effectively creating an age restriction for its use.[17]





(02)

K-12 EDUCATION

Prepared by Naomi Whitaker, MPH

- The K-12 education system plays an integral part in the lives of children and adolescents across the United States.
- The education system serves as a place of academic development and also public health.
- Colorado is proposing legislation related to both school funding and taxation on firearms.



OVERVIEW

In the United States, **gun violence remains the leading cause of death for children and youth [1]**. Research has shown that detrimental effects that gun violence can have on the mental health of youth [2]. Access to mental health services is an essential component to the mental wellbeing of children and youth. Given the increased number of mass school shootings in the nation, there have also been dialogue surrounding increased school safety measures.

COLORADO: PROPOSITION KK [3]

EXCISE TAX ON FIREARMS DEALERS, MANUFACTURERS AND AMMUNITION VENDORS (2024)

Ballot Measure Type: legislatively referred constitutional amendment

Colorado has proposed legislation to allocate \$3 million dollars generated from the Excise Tax on Firearms and Ammunition to be directed to the Behavioral and Mental Health Cash Fund for children's behavioral health crisis response services; and to allocate \$1 million dollars to the School Disbursement Program Cash Fund to improve the infrastructure of school safety.

KEY POINTS

There has been vocal support and opposition for the excise tax proposition in Colorado. This section provides examples of arguments on both sides of the issue.

SUPPORTING

There have been several persons and organization in support of Proposition KK. Overall supporters echo a similar sentiment of the traumatic effects of gun violence and the overwhelming need for improved access to mental health services for youth. Examples of supporters include:

Everytown for Gun Safety

Believes that Proposition KK would provide much needed funding for the mental health services needed in the face of trauma imposed by the "gun-violence epidemic". They have described this ballot measure as groundbreaking. [4]

Yes on KK

An avid PAC group supporting the increased funding that proposition KK will provide to increase and improve mental health services for at-risk youth. [5]

State Representative and Majority Leader, Monica Duran

It is Duran's position that the bill is "not removing anything" nor is it "impacting anyone's Second Amendment rights". Instead, she argues that this is a step in the right direction to get families and children much needed support.[6]

Notable supporters also include:
Representative Meg Froelich
Senator Janet Buckner
Senator Chris Hansen. [5]

KEY POINTS (CONT.)

OPPOSITION

There have been several persons and organization in opposition of Proposition KK. Many believe that this proposition does infringe on the rights of gun owners and imposes an unnecessary tax. Examples of opposers include:

National Rifle Association

The association believes that the proposition imposes an increased economic burden on gun owners and that the current tax on firearms is already high. Moreover, the NRA sees this as an attack on the Second Amendment. [7]

Independence Institute

They have also expressed opposition arguing that the tax “risks exacerbating socioeconomic disparities in who has access to the best tools to defend themselves by pricing those with limited economic means out of the ability to purchase and train with firearms.” Moreover, the Independence Institute says that the legislature previously cut funding on mental health services and has then decided to pass that burden onto the consumer. [8]

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

- If passed, Proposition KK could increase access to much-needed mental health services to families in need. By increasing access and providing more funding for publicly available mental health resources, this could alleviate the financial burden of families seeking care and improve healthy help-seeking behaviors [9].
- Moreover, increased access to mental health services could encourage proactive attitudes towards mental health and curtail the development of serious mental health issues[10,11]. This could result in more healthy youth and children that grow into their optimal selves and are able to contribute meaningfully to the community and their families.
- Families could also consider other aspects of the proposition such as increased funding to school safety measures such as school resource officers. While some believe increased presence of officers in schools is a way to curtail violence, increased policing of students can often have a disparate impact on children of color [12]. This can result in excessive punishment and labeling of students that may also contribute to poor mental health.

YES VOTE

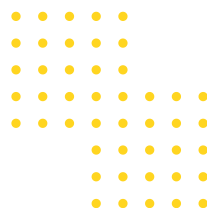


A **'Yes'** vote supports levying a 6.5% excise tax on the manufacture and sale of firearms and ammunition to be imposed on firearms dealers, manufacturers, and ammunition vendors and appropriating the revenue to the Firearms and Ammunition Excise Tax Cash Fund to be used to fund crime victim services programs, education programs, and mental and behavioral health programs for children and veterans.

NO VOTE



A **'No'** vote opposes levying a 6.5% excise tax on the manufacture and sale of firearms and ammunition to be imposed on firearms dealers, manufacturers, and ammunition vendors.



(03)

HIGHER EDUCATION

VOCATIONAL / TECHNICAL TRAINING

Prepared by Khiara Makayla Lee, MPH + Naomi Whitaker, MPH



- Education is proven to be an important social determinant of health for families.
- Understanding policies that shape higher education is crucial to ensure equitable and fair outcomes for students.

SOURCE DATA LISTED IN **RESOURCES** SECTION

KEY POINTS

There has been vocal support and opposition for the reform of the Board of Regents in Nevada. This section provides examples of arguments on both sides of the issue.

SUPPORTING

There have been several persons and organizations vocal about their support for the Nevada Question 1 Ballot Measure. Supporters seemingly echo a common disdain for the current functioning of the Board of Regents, calling for more oversight and accountability. Examples of supporters include:

Former State Legislator, Elliot Anderson

Anderson is one of the authors of the joint resolution that led to the development of this ballot measure. His primary argument is that there needs to be more accountability for the Board of Regents and therefore the legislature should have the power to pass laws that affect the board. [2]

Nevadans for Quality Higher Education

The group states that this bill would help to improve quality of education by instilling measures of increased transparency and accountability by taking away the power of the Board of Regents to act as an additional branch of government [3]

Nevada Faculty Alliance

Some members are in support of the ballot initiative and their argument is similar to that of the Legislator Anderson and Nevadans for Quality Higher Education in that this initiative has grown out of a disdain for the current conduct of the Board of Regents including discriminatory practices, mishandling of funds, and an alarming amount of autonomy.[4,5]

OVERVIEW

The governance structure of higher education systems varies across the United States. Recently the United States has seen several cases of restructuring the Board of Regents governance structure due to various reasons. The Board of Regents is a key entity that oversees and manages universities and colleges. The board is also responsible for decision-making regarding policies, finances, and overall direction.

NEVADA: QUESTION 1 [1]

HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM,
ACCOUNTABILITY, AND OVERSIGHT
(2024)

Ballot Measure Type: legislatively
referred constitutional amendment

Nevada proposes to remove the constitutional provisions governing the election and duties of the Board of Regents and its control and management of the affairs and funds of the State University. Requiring the Legislature to provide by law for the governance of the State University and for the auditing of public higher education institutions in Nevada.

KEY POINTS (CONT.)

OPPOSING

Overall, those in opposition of Ballot Question 1 hold the sentiment that the passing of this amendment is unnecessary and does not ensure accountability nor quality education for students. While some opposers acknowledge a need to fix the educational system, they believe that this may grant legislature with an excessive amount of power.

Nevada Faculty Alliance

Some members are in opposition and feel this could unveil more problems and political hijacking of education [6]. The Nevada Faculty Alliance has also fact-checked the ballot-initiative and overall feel that in some cases there may be an over-promising of outcomes[7]. Moreover, the ballot referendum does not provide enough clarity on the future of higher education policies and how this may impact issues such as faculty tenure, curriculum, and other components [7].

Chair of the Faculty Senate of the University of Nevada, Reno, Amy Parson

Parsons questioned what other powers would the legislature want outside of what it already has. She points out that the legislature already has power to impact the budgets and the financial allocation of monies that heavily influence the functioning of colleges and universities.[6]

YES VOTE



A **"YES"** to Ballot Question 1 supports removing constitutional status of the Board of Regents (which governs, controls, and manages the state universities in Nevada) thereby allowing the state legislature to review and change the governing organization of state universities,

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The Board of Regents is an important entity responsible for policies, funding, and other functions of universities and colleges. Therefore, the Board of Regents plays an important role in shaping the context in which students, faculty, and staff engage in the academic setting/workplace.

The decisions of the Board of Regents are linked to student academic achievement, health, and well-being. In addition, faculty and staff are also affected as it shapes their professional development, policies regarding curriculum, compensation, and other resources.

Given this, it is important that the Board acts with integrity and fairness to ensure Universities equitably serve all students, faculty, and staff. Families that send students to college should expect that the governing body will act in the best interests of their students. Faculty and staff also deserve a fair, healthy, and equitable workplace that allows them to thrive in their personal and professional endeavors.

Overall, the governance structure of the higher education system is linked to well-being of those persons that engage as the policies enacted shape access to resources and campus environment

NO VOTE



A **"NO"** to Ballot Question 1 opposes removing constitutional status of the Board of Regents, thereby keeping the current governing organization of state universities without state legislative authority to change it.



VOCATIONAL/ TECHNICAL TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

The proposed amendment would add the following language to Section 14(b) of Article 19 of the Arkansas Constitution "the following higher education institutions... (A) A public or private nonprofit two-year or four-year college or university; (B) A public or private vocational-technical school; or (C) A public or private technical institute." replacing the current language "public and private nonprofit two-year and four-year colleges and universities" [8]

KEY POINTS

A **supporter**, and the proposer, of the amendment is Arkansas state representative Robin Lundstrum (R), who said, "... the proposed constitutional amendment is needed to help students access training for vocations including licensed practical nursing, trucking, refrigeration, industrial maintenance, and plumbing." [9] She also pointed out that students who choose vocational-tech/trade school programs are able to be hired for jobs with starting salaries around \$40,000 after finishing six to eight months of training. There seems to be **no opposition** for this amendment. It passed the state House with a 97-0 vote and the state Senate with a vote of 30-0.[8]

ARKANSAS: ISSUE 1

LOTTERY PROCEED FUNDING FOR VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS AMENDMENT

This ballot type is a legislatively referred constitution amendment. A "yes" vote supports allowing proceeds from the state lottery to fund scholarships and grants for vocational-technical schools and technical institutes. A "no" vote opposes allowing proceeds from the state lottery to fund scholarships and grants for vocational-technical schools and technical institutes.

KEY POINTS

The Arkansas Scholarship Lottery (ASL) was established in 2009. This scholarship lottery funds several state scholarships that were only available to students who attended a private and public two and four-year colleges and universities. Since its inception, the ASL has distributed more than 720,000 college scholarships. Shane Broadway, vice president for university relations for the Arkansas State University System mentioned attempting to further develop the scholarship program and could not include vocational-technical schools because of the wording in the constitutional amendment. This addition to the constitutional amendment would allow for students enrolled in public or private vocational-technical schools and technical institutions to be eligible to receive scholarships and grants funded by the ASL. [8]

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The passage of this amendment would positively affect families who are seeking education and training at vocational-technical schools (trade schools) or technical institutes in several areas of life. With more scholarships available to this subset of post-secondary students, this amendment would reduce the economic burden while obtaining specialized training. The skill sets gained at these institutions afford students increased economic opportunities after completion. Moreover, higher education has been linked to improved mental health, job security and increased financial stability.

(04)

HOUSING

*Prepared by
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- Housing is an important determinant of health and well-being.
- A shortage of affordable housing in the US continues to impact how individuals can live and plan for their future.[1][2]
- California + Rhode Island include ballot initiatives aiming to address the ongoing housing crisis across the country.

SOURCE DATA LISTED IN **RESOURCES** SECTION



INTRODUCTION

Housing is often cited as an important social determinant of health that impacts an individual's physical and mental health.[1][2] The United States continues to grapple with a worsening housing crisis. Over 21 million renters across the U.S. allocated over 30% of their income on housing costs in 2023.[3] According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, households are considered cost-burdened when they spend more than 30% on housing costs, and severely cost-burdened if they spend more than 50% of their income.[4] Additionally, research suggests that the U.S. housing shortage crisis is driven by a lack of affordable housing within the country. [5]

Lack of affordable housing can impact one's health and mental well-being by creating housing instability in the form of eviction, foreclosure, and/or homelessness.[6] The lack of affordable housing also impacts families' by creating a financial strain on families' and often forces them to choose between food, heating, housing, and other needs.[7] Fortunately, research has shown that housing interventions for low-income people have been found to improve health outcomes.[8] As the lack of affordable housing continues to rise in the U.S., investigating initiatives on the ballot that aim to address this rising concern for families is vital to ensuring families have a safe and stable environment to grow and develop. California and Rhode Island have housing related ballots that will directly impact families.

CALIFORNIA PROPOSITION 33

PROHIBIT STATE LIMITATIONS ON LOCAL RENT CONTROL INITIATIVE

California Proposition 33, the Prohibit State Limitations on Local Rent Control Initiative, is on the ballot in California as an initiated state statute in the November 2024 election as a statutory ballot.

YES VOTE



A **"YES"** vote on California Proposition 33 supports repealing the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act (1995), allowing cities and counties to limit rent on any housing and limit the rent for first-time tenants, and adds language to state law to prohibit the state from limiting "the right of any city, county, or city and county to maintain, enact, or expand residential control."

NO VOTE



A **"NO"** vote on California Proposition 33 would oppose the repeal of Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act (1995), which prohibits rent control on single-family homes and houses completed after February 1, 1995. The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act enacted in 1995 prohibited rent control on single-family homes and houses completed after February 1, 1995, and prohibited rent control laws that mandate what a landlord can charge a tenant when they first move in.

KEY POINTS

SUPPORTERS of Proposition 33 include individuals and organizations such as U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, the California Democratic Party, California Nurses Association, Americans for Democratic Action–Southern California, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, Housing is a Human Right, Pomona United Stable Housing Coalition, Social Security Works–California, Veterans’ Voices, and Justice for Renters, the organization that currently leads the campaign in support of Proposition 33.

Supporters of this ballot measure appeal to voters who continue to face soaring rent costs. A vote yes may support decreasing the cost burden associated with housing within the state.

OPPONENTS of Proposition 33 consist of individuals and organizations such as State Senator Toni Atkins, State Assembly Member Buffy Wicks, unions Norcal Carpenters Union and United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, and organizations such as Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles, California Apartment Association, California Business Roundtable, California Chamber of Commerce, and California YIMBY.

Opponents of Proposition 33 argue that it has a negative fiscal impact for the state that would reduce local property tax revenues, stifle investments in housing in the state, as well as lead to property deterioration. Additionally, opponents argue that this initiative would not increase funding for affordable housing, and instead, would empower cities and counties to impose strict rent control on all apartments and single-family homes. Opponents suggests that the initiative only puts a Band-Aid on the ongoing housing crisis, and financially would negatively impact state housing revenues.





YES VOTE



A **"YES"** vote on Rhode Island Question 3 supports issuing \$120 million in bonds to increase the availability of housing in the state.

NO VOTE



A **"NO"** vote on Rhode Island Question 3 opposes issuing \$120 million in bonds to increase the availability of housing in the state.

RHODE ISLAND QUESTION 3

THE HOUSING ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENT, AND INFRASTRUCTURE BOND MEASURE

Rhode Island Question 3, the Housing Acquisition, Development, and Infrastructure Bond Measure is on the ballot in Rhode Island as a legislative referendum in the November 2024 election. Question 3 would issue \$120 million in bonds to increase the availability of housing within the state of Rhode Island. If Question 3 were to pass, the allocated \$120 million in bonds would include \$80 million for low- and moderate-income housing and \$20 million for low-, moderate-, and middle-income housing for homeownership.

KEY POINTS

Question 3 was introduced into the Rhode Island General Assembly as a provision of Article 5 of House Bill 7225 (HB 7225), the state appropriations bill for the 2025 fiscal year. Due to the bond amount exceeding \$50,000, the state General Assembly was required to obtain voter insight on this decision.

The ballot measure passed the House by a vote of sixty-eight supporting the initiative, and six opposing it. Additionally, the Senate also voted in support of the ballot measure, securing thirty-five votes supporting the initiative, and only two votes opposing it. Overall, the ballot measure appears to have **bipartisan support**, as well as **no major opposers** or supporters. This aligns with previous iterations of the measure, as between 2010-2022, Rhode Island voters approved all four bonds in question related to housing.



IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Successfully passing California Proposition 33 and Rhode Island Question 3 is a promising way to provide families, specifically low-income families, with a safe environment to grow and a greater sense of stability. A lack of affordable housing creates significant financial strains to families face due to rising which can impact familial health and well-being. [7]

Affordable housing can improve health outcomes by providing families with economic stability, allowing them to allocate more of their income to resources such as food and healthcare expenditures.[1] Studies have linked a lack of affordable housing with an increased likelihood of health risks such as asthma, food insecurity, and developmental delays in children and increased mental distress, reduced access to care and incidents of depression in adults.[2],[3] Other studies have shown that children residing in areas with increased rates of unaffordable housing had an increased likelihood of worse health, more behavioral problems, and lower school performance.[4]

By reducing housing costs, and providing mechanisms for families to acquire safe and affordable housing, voters can provide families with the support needed to stretch their dollar further, decrease familial stress related and the financial burden associated with rising housing costs, and increase stability for families in this country.



(05)

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS/HEALTH

Prepared by Sara D. Murry, MSW, LCSW-C + Alexandra DiOrio, MPH, CHES

- Research shows LGBTQ+ people in the US are more likely to experience physical and mental health challenges¹ that can come from discrimination.²
- Several states have ballot measures concerning LGBTQ+ rights and LGBTQ+ health, including removing same-sex marriage bans, changing gendered language to neutral, and expanding anti-discrimination protections in state constitutions.

SOURCE DATA LISTED IN **RESOURCES** SECTION

LGBTQ+ RIGHTS/HEALTH



STATE CONSTITUTION REPEALS OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE BANS

This year, California, Colorado, and Hawaii are voting on changes to their state constitutions to remove bans on same-sex marriage. Before the 2015 US Supreme Court case *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 30 states had laws saying marriage was only between one man and one woman, including California in 2008, Colorado in 2006, and Hawaii in 1998. The Supreme Court decided on June 26, 2015, that same-sex marriage is protected by the Fourteenth Amendment, which means states can't ban it and must recognize same-sex marriages from other states. The removal of same-sex marriage bans in these states is widely supported, reflecting growing acceptance of LGBTQ+ rights.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Marriage equality positively impacts the well-being of LGBTQ+ couples and their children. Marriage creates a loving and stable environment for their kids, which is crucial for emotional and social development. Marriage equality promotes healthy family dynamics, allowing all families to thrive and providing children with the love and support they need.

The ability to marry strengthens the bond between partners, leading to better relationship stability and support. Many same-sex couples report improved feelings of safety and happiness after getting married. Having the legal recognition of their relationships allows LGBTQ+ families to access to important financial and health benefits. When families are treated equally, it sends a positive message to children about acceptance and respect for diversity--helping reduce stigma and discrimination.³⁻⁴

2024 Ballots to Repeal Same-Sex Marriage Bans



California
Proposition 3



Colorado
Amendment J



Hawaii
Repeal Sec. 23

CALIFORNIA PROPOSITION 3

California Proposition 3, called the “Right to Marry and Repeal Proposition 8 Amendment” (2024), is a proposed change to the California Constitution. If accepted, it will change the California Constitution to recognize the right to marry for everyone, no matter their sex or race. This change will update the law to show that the right to marry is fundamental.⁵

CALIFORNIA: PROPOSITION 3

RIGHT TO MARRY AND REPEAL PROPOSITION 8 AMENDMENT (2024)

California Proposition 3, called the Right to Marry and Repeal Proposition 8 Amendment (2024), is a proposed change to the state constitution.

A **"YES"** vote means you support this amendment, which says that the right to marry is important in California and will get rid of Proposition 8 from 2008, which said that marriage is only between one man and one woman.

A **"NO"** vote means you do not support the amendment and want to keep Proposition 8 in place.

KEY POINTS

SUPPORTERS believe this amendment will help protect the rights of same-sex and interracial couples and that Proposition 8 doesn't represent California's values anymore, especially since same-sex marriage is already legal.⁶ Supporters include Governor Gavin Newsom, Senator Scott Wiener, Assembly Member Evan Low, the California Democratic Party, the California Labor Federation union, the ACLU of Northern California, California Chamber of Commerce, Equality California, Human Rights Campaign, League of Women Voters of California, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California, and Trans Latina Coalition.

While no political campaigns **OPPOSE** Proposition 3, some organizations oppose it for religious reasons. Some think changing the definition of marriage could lead to more problems, such as allowing marriages between siblings or parents and children.⁷

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Although Proposition 8 (2008) has since been invalidated by *Obergefell v. Hodges* in 2015, it continues to represent a moment in time when same-sex marriage was made illegal in California. Its ongoing place in the California Constitution serves as a reminder that the rights of same-sex couples and same-sex individuals to marriage equality were, and could again be, threatened. Repealing Proposition 8 (2008) with Proposition 3 (2024) will provide state-level protection to these marriages that mirrors federal-level protections. Families and children in families thrive when they are deemed legitimate and given equal protections under the law.

COLORADO AMENDMENT J

Colorado Amendment J, Remove Constitutional Same-Sex Marriage Ban Amendment (2024), is a legislatively referred constitutional amendment. If passed, it will repeal Section 31 of Article II of the Colorado Constitution, deleting the language, "Only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state".⁸

COLORADO AMENDMENT J

SHALL THERE BE AN AMENDMENT TO THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION REMOVING THE BAN ON SAME-SEX MARRIAGE?

If Colorado Amendment J is passed, it would repeal Section 31 of Article II of the Colorado Constitution, deleting the language that defines marriage as between one man and one woman.

A **"YES"** vote supports removing the definition of marriage as only between one man and one woman.

A **"NO"** vote keeps the definition of marriage as between one man and one woman.

KEY POINTS

SUPPORTERS are working to remove Colorado state's ban on same-sex marriage with a vote on Amendment J in November 2024. This amendment aims to repeal a 2006 law that defined marriage as only between one man and one woman, which has been declared unconstitutional by courts.⁹ While this law does not currently stop same-sex couples from marrying, supporters believe it is important to remove it to protect marriage rights in case the U.S. Supreme Court changes its mind in the future. If that happens, Colorado's definition of marriage could prevent new same-sex marriages. The campaign is led by groups like One Colorado and Rocky Mountain Equality, with support from over 200 organizations and leaders.¹⁰⁻¹¹

There is no major organized **OPPOSITION** to Amendment J. Religious leaders across Colorado openly support it.¹² Opponents might argue that marriage should remain between one man and one woman on religious grounds and that the Colorado constitution should reflect that if court rulings change.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Amendment J aims to protect same-sex couples' right to marry and to foster equality for all families in Colorado. While some families may feel uncomfortable with this change for religious reasons, Amendment J is overwhelmingly supported and has no official opposition. If passed, it will create a more inclusive and equitable environment for all families in Colorado.

HAWAII AMENDMENT

Hawaii Amendment, *Remove Legislature Authority to Limit Marriage to Opposite-Sex Couples Amendment* (2024), is a legislatively referred constitutional amendment. The official ballot title is, "Shall the state constitution be amended to repeal the legislature's authority to reserve marriage to opposite-sex couples?"

A "yes" vote would remove Hawaii Constitution Article I, Section 23, thereby deleting the following text from Hawaii's constitution: "MARRIAGE Section 23. The legislature shall have the power to reserve marriage to opposite-sex couples."

A "no" vote opposes removing the provision.¹³

HAWAII AMENDMENT

REMOVE LEGISLATURE AUTHORITY TO LIMIT MARRIAGE TO OPPOSITE-SEX COUPLES AMENDMENT

If the Hawaii Amendment to remove Section 23 is passed, it would amend the Hawaii Constitution to remove the legislature's authority to limit marriage to opposite-sex couples, promoting marriage equality for same-sex couples.

A **"YES"** vote would amend the Hawaii Constitution to remove language limiting marriage to only opposite-sex couples.

A **"NO"** vote would maintain the current language limiting marriage to only opposite-sex couples.

KEY POINTS

Hawaii has a strong history of supporting same-sex marriage, beginning when the Hawaii Supreme Court ruled in 1993 that same-sex couples could marry. In 2013, Hawaii officially legalized same-sex marriage.¹⁴

The amendment to change Section 23 has overwhelming **support**. Supporters believe that removing this outdated language will protect the right to marry for all couples and prevent old laws from affecting rights in the future. This amendment aims to eliminate discriminatory language that has unfairly excluded the LGBTQ+ community for 26 years. Vote Yes for Marriage Equality is leading the campaign in support of the amendment. Major supporters include the Democratic Party of Hawaii and more than 10 organizations.¹⁵⁻¹⁶

There is no official **opposition** to this amendment.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Hawaii's amendment to remove outdated language about marriage could have a positive impact on families by promoting inclusivity and equality for same-sex couples.

Supporters believe this change will create a more supportive environment for all families, allowing same-sex parents to raise their children in loving homes with legal protections.

KEY POINTS

SUPPORTERS of the amendment include New Yorkers for Equal Rights; U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D); U.S. Representative Hakeem Jefferies (D); Governor Kathy Hochul (D); State Senators Liz Krueger (D) and Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D); State Assembly Members Carl Heastie (D) and Rebecca Seawright (D); Attorney General Letitia James (D); Jewish Community Relations Council; League of Women Voters of New York; Make the Road New York; NAACP New York; National Institute of Reproductive Health; New Pride Agenda; New York Civil Liberties Union; New York Immigration Coalition; Planned Parenthood Action Fund; and Planned Parenthood of Greater New York. Supporters argue that while the state has anti-discrimination statutes, the Constitution does not adequately protect equality and this amendment would codify fundamental rights and protect New Yorker's freedoms particularly for groups who have historically been targeted and discriminated against including individuals with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people of color, immigrants, women, and pregnant people.

OPPOSERS of the amendment include the Coalition to Protect Kids-NY; Moms for Liberty, Queens County, NY; New York Catholic Conference; Priests for Life; Students for Life Action; State Senators George Borrello (R) and Andrew Lanza (R); State Assembly Member Christopher Tague (R); and the Republican Party of New York. Opponents argue that the text of the amendment is too broad, could lead to lawsuits against certain religions and could codify late-term abortions. Opposers are also concerned about parental rights, specifically that the amendment would allow gender-affirming care for minors without parental consent and prevent schools from telling parents that their children identify as transgender. They are also concerned that the amendment will allow individuals assigned male at birth to participate in female sports. Opposers state that the amendment would create "new constitutional rights" that could interfere with their religious beliefs and beliefs about parental rights.¹⁵

NEW YORK PROPOSAL 1

EQUAL PROTECTION OF LAW AMENDMENT

New York Proposal 1, Equal Protection of Law Amendment (2024) is a legislatively referred constitutional amendment.

A **"YES"** vote supports amending the Equal Protection Clause in the state constitution to include that people cannot be denied rights based on their "ethnicity, national origin, age, and disability" or "sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy."¹⁵

A **"NO"** vote opposes adding the above language to the state constitution. The Equal Protection Clause currently only includes protections for race, color, creed, and religion.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The inclusion of ethnicity, country of origin, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy in the state constitution ensures greater protections for all families in New York. By protecting access to necessary medical care, families can make decisions that align best with their values. Both discrimination and barriers to accessing health care procedures can lead to poorer health and financial outcomes.^{2, 16-19}



KEY POINTS

The amendment would change the terms used in multiple parts of the constitution such as removing “he” and replacing it with the office title such as “the Governor” when referencing a position or “the person’s” when referencing an individual.²⁰ The substance of the constitution does not change, only the pronouns.

State Representatives Becky Drury (D) and Jess Olson (R) **support** the amendment while State Representative Bethany Soye (R) opposes it. State Representatives Drury and Olson argue that the constitution language should reflect the state’s history of female leaders and that young girls may not think they are capable of running for office in the future if the state constitution only includes male pronouns. Supporters focus on the importance of representation beyond male pronouns.

State Representative Soye **opposes** the amendment because she believes that the state constitution does not disenfranchise anyone as women are already able to attain positions of authority. The opposition says that the pronoun change is “frivolous.”²⁰

SOUTH DAKOTA: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT E

GENDER-NEUTRAL CONSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE AMENDMENT

Constitutional Amendment E, Gender-Neutral Constitutional Language Amendment (2024) is a legislatively referred constitutional amendment.

A **“YES”** vote supports amending the state constitution language to change male pronouns to gender neutral terms or titles.

A **“NO”** vote opposes amending the constitution to use gender neutral terms or titles.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Gender-neutral language enables individuals who do not identify as male or use male pronouns to see themselves represented in the state constitution. Seeing oneself represented in constitutional language as well as in political positions may increase political engagement and likelihood of running for office. Research studies found that people feel more included in the political process when their representatives share the same characteristics as them such as race/ethnicity, gender, and life experiences.²¹

(06)

MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

Prepared by Cheyenne Schad, MPH



- Voters in Florida, North Dakota, and South Dakota have marijuana legalization initiatives on their 2024 ballots.
- Legalization impacts oversight and regulation of products and redefines criminalization of marijuana possession.

MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

INTRODUCTION

In 2022, possession of marijuana constituted over 30% of drug possession arrests in the United States [1], with non-white communities being hit the hardest. Black Americans have a 3.5 times higher likelihood of being arrested for marijuana possession compared to their White counterparts [2]. One way to decrease this disparity in arrests is to decriminalize or legalize the possession of cannabis products [3]. Polling shows that most Americans are in favor of legalizing marijuana for personal and medical use, with only 10% opposed to any form of legalization [4]. In the November 2024 elections, three states – Florida, North Dakota, and South Dakota – have ballot measures regarding the legalization of marijuana possession, sales, and use.



2024 Ballots to Legalize or Decriminalize Marijuana



Florida
Amendment 3



North Dakota
Measure 5



South Dakota
Measure 29

FLORIDA AMENDMENT 3

This initiative legalizes the recreational use of marijuana for adults in Florida. Currently, marijuana use for medicinal purposes is legal, and decriminalization has slowly been implemented at the city and county level [5]. Smart and Safe Florida, ACLU Florida, and Athletes for Care are supporters of Amendment 3 because it respects Floridians' freedom of choice to make decisions regarding the use of marijuana products, and it is a step in the right direction of minimizing the disproportionate impacts of criminalization on people of color in Florida [6,7]. Vote No on 3, Floridians Against Recreational Marijuana, and Florida Freedom Fund all oppose Amendment 3, stating that it is too liberal in its allowances and that it will be difficult to regulate since it will be a part of their constitution [8].

INITIATED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION INITIATIVE

'Yes' vote - supports legalizing marijuana for adults 21 years and older and allowing individuals to possess up to three ounces of marijuana

'No' vote - opposes legalizing marijuana for adult use in Florida

KEY POINTS

SUPPORTERS of this initiative emphasize the over-governance of enforcing the current marijuana laws, taking away personal choice and liberties of Floridians. They also highlight the disproportionate policing of the current laws, stating that people of color are more likely to be arrested for possession, despite similar rates of use as their White counterparts [6,7]. Their argument leans heavily on allowing people to make their own choices regarding the products they use without the fear of government interference.

OPPOSERS of this initiative use a lot of fear tactics in their messaging. They appeal to the more conservative voters by saying the initiative is too liberal, with the spokeswoman for Vote No on 3 even stating, "Amendment 3 will have disastrous downstream consequences that will turn our state into an east coast version of California" [9]. They also appeal to parents, stating that people will be using marijuana everywhere in public, exposing their children to drug use and second-hand smoke, endangering their children. Opposers also state that the initiative gives more power and money to marijuana corporations since the initiative does not allow people to grow their own plants [10]. People will be using black-market marijuana products since it is cheaper, but this increase in black-market sales means that drug deals will be more rampant in their communities. Overall, the wording and terminology used by opposers to the initiative underscore voters to not be fooled by the supporters claims, and those who vote 'yes' on the initiative have succumbed to the big corporations' advertising tactics.

NORTH DAKOTA MEASURE 5

This initiative legalizes the use of marijuana for recreational purposes, with specific limitations in the amount of product a person can possess at a time. The use of marijuana products for medical purposes is legal in North Dakota, but two previous initiatives aimed at legalizing recreation use both failed [11]. Supporters of the initiative see the legalization of marijuana for recreational use as an opportunity to boost their state's economy, redirecting the funds used for enforcement towards other more serious crimes [12]. Opponents to the initiative – including the state's medical, hospital, and law enforcement associations – see the legalization of marijuana for recreational use as a potential danger to their communities, stating that increasing access to marijuana will lead to an increase in use of more dangerous substances [13].

In 2023, marijuana accounted for **48%** of drug seizure cases in North Dakota [14]

KEY POINTS

SUPPORTERS of this initiative focus on the economic benefits of legalizing recreational marijuana in North Dakota. Legalization enables law enforcement resources to be directed towards more serious crimes [12]. It also stimulates tax revenue, which can be used to increase funding for education, infrastructure, and public services. Supporters also emphasize that legalization still comes with sensible restrictions to the use and distribution of marijuana products. Their argument leans heavily on the potential economic boon of marijuana legalization, leading to greater investment in community betterment and individuals' rights.

OPPONENTS of this initiative argue that the legalization of the recreational use of marijuana will open the door to more serious drug use, leading to new problems. A major concern for opposers is the increased access to marijuana products, especially for the youth in North Dakota [13]. There is also concern about the increase in crimes committed while under the influence of marijuana, such as driving while intoxicated. They argue that the potential negative impacts far outweigh the positive impacts of legalizing the recreational use of marijuana. Overall, the opposition leans heavily on community members' fear of drug use and addiction in their communities.

INITIATED STATE STATUTE

MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION INITIATIVE

'Yes' vote - supports legalizing recreational marijuana, allowing individuals to possess up to 1 ounce of marijuana, 4 grams of concentrate, 300 milligrams of edibles; and allowing individuals to grow three plants with a limit of six plants per household

'No' vote - opposes legalizing recreational marijuana

SOUTH DAKOTA: MEASURE 29

This initiative legalizes the use, sale, and possession of up to 2 ounces of marijuana, 16 grams of concentrate, and 1600 milligrams of THC-infused products for adults 21 years or older in South Dakota [15]. The use of marijuana for recreational purposes is illegal in the state. An amendment initiative was passed by voters in 2020 to legalize the use of marijuana for recreational purposes, but the state legislature ruled it unconstitutional, so the amendment was not instituted. South Dakotans for Better Marijuana Laws is the lead supporter of this initiative, stating that legalizing marijuana will allow police funding to be directed elsewhere, bring jobs to local communities, and allow people in need of medical marijuana cards better access [16]. Protecting South Dakota Kids is the lead opposition to the initiative, arguing that legalizing marijuana will just open the door for other, more harmful drugs and increase crime in local communities [17].

INITIATED STATE STATUTE

MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION INITIATIVE

'Yes' vote - supports legalizing the recreational use, possession, and distribution of marijuana

'No' vote - opposes legalizing the recreational use, possession, and distribution of marijuana

KEY POINTS

SUPPORTERS of the initiative highlight the importance of decreasing police spending on enforcement of current marijuana laws and the right for South Dakotans to make their own choices regarding marijuana use [16]. Their focus on upholding personal liberty - a fundamental American ideal - shifts the mindset from the belittlement of unnecessary policing to one of personal responsibility and empowerment. With specific regulations in place - such as prohibiting the use of marijuana products on or near schools or driving while intoxicated - supporters also argue that the legalization of marijuana is a safe choice for South Dakotans, and voters previously agreed with this statement. Just four years prior, voters approved an initiative to legalize recreational marijuana, but the decision was struck down by a state judge who ruled the passing of the initiative as unconstitutional. The voters of South Dakota previously shared their opinions on the legalization of recreational marijuana, and supporters argue it is time for their state government to listen.

OPPONENTS of the initiative argue that legalizing recreational marijuana will lead to higher rates of drug use and crime [17]. They especially lean into parents' fears of their children becoming addicted or depressed to marijuana and pull statistics from states where marijuana is legal to reinforce their claims. On the economic side, the opponents do not see the legalization of marijuana as beneficial, stating that the only ones who will benefit are the marijuana corporations. Overall, the opponents use fear and anti-big business rhetoric to deter South Dakotans from voting in support of the initiative.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Legalization will impact the families of those three states in a variety of ways. It enables government oversight of marijuana products, ensuring proper licensing for dispensaries and the regulation of the products they carry. Increasing safe access to marijuana products has been found to decrease overdoses from opioids [18]. With the growing concern of the opioid epidemic in the United States, increasing access to marijuana is a way to combat accidental overdose from opioid misuse.

Legalizing marijuana will decrease the number of families impacted by involvement in the criminal justice system. The negative effects of incarceration on children and families are well documented. Children with an incarcerated parent face a greater risk of mental health challenges, with some research even showing that parental incarceration can be more impactful on a child's mental well-being than divorce or parental death [19]. The effects of incarceration are long-lasting, impacting individuals and families long after a sentence is served. People with a criminal conviction can face difficulties re-entering the workforce, making it difficult for them to financially support themselves and their families. Nearly fifty percent of people who were previously incarcerated did not have a job within one year of their release [19]. They also have a higher likelihood of experiencing food and housing insecurity, and federal relief programs - such as SNAP and TANF - are not accessible to those with previous convictions [20].



Overall, legalizing marijuana can have positive impacts on families in the United States. Decreasing incarceration for marijuana possession enables parents to financially and emotionally support their children. More families will have access to social services if they are facing food insecurity. Lastly, families and communities as a whole can benefit from local dispensaries, as they can bring jobs, allow safe access to marijuana, and decrease the use of riskier substances that can lead to accidental overdose and even death.



(07)

MINIMUM WAGE & PAID LEAVE

*Prepared by Dara Gleeson, MPH, CHES, Deena Shariq, B.S.,
and Sasha Tolliver, M.S.*



- Six states include ballot measures related to minimum wage and/or paid leave: Arizona, Alaska, California, Massachusetts, Missouri, and Nebraska



MINIMUM WAGE & PAID LEAVE

IMPACT ON FAMILIES: PAID LEAVE

**ALASKA, MISSOURI,
+ NEBRASKA**

The impact of passing paid leave ballot initiatives would likely be positive for family health and well-being. Currently, the U.S. lacks a national paid leave policy, leaving many workers—especially those in low-wage jobs—without the financial ability to take time off to recover from illness or care for a sick family member [8]. In Nebraska, for example, only 64.5% of businesses offer paid sick leave to full-time employees, and just 22% to part-time employees [9].

Expanding paid sick leave would allow workers to take necessary time off without fear of financial repercussions, leading to better health outcomes for both parents and children as well as a less stressful home environment. Evidence shows that paid sick leave not only benefits individual health [10, 11], but it also improves workforce productivity and reduces the spread of illness [12], making this policy change an investment in both public health and family well-being.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES: MINIMUM WAGE

**ALASKA, ARIZONA, CALIFORNIA,
MASSACHUSETTS + MISSOURI**

Minimum wage workers are disproportionately women, young adults, and individuals without a college degree [1], and many of these workers face economic hardship, even while working full-time [2]. Raising the minimum wage could provide greater economic security for low-income families, leading to better access to healthcare, education, and safe housing for both parents and children [3]. The boost in income may also curtail poverty rates and reduce the need to work extended hours, which is associated with parents' decreased time spent with their children [4]. Additionally, as wages increase in tandem with the cost of living, the gap between household earnings and affording basic necessities may close, resulting in improved food security [5].

In Massachusetts, where the initiative also includes reforms for tipped workers, passing the initiative may reduce reliance on unstable tipping income, further enhancing financial security. In brief, the minimum wage ballot measures in Alaska, Arizona, California, Massachusetts, and Missouri are likely to yield positive impacts for low-income families who rely on minimum wage employment, particularly in regards to caregiving and stability.

However, it is important to note the possible unintended consequences of raising the minimum wage as well. Minimum wage increases are associated with reductions in employment opportunities and increases to the cost of goods and services [6], which may pose financial risks for caregivers [7]. Moreover, small businesses, many of which are family owned, might face hardships incurred by higher labor costs.

ALASKA

MINIMUM LABOR STANDARDS INITIATIVE

INDIRECT INITIATED STATE STATUTE

"An Act increasing the Alaska minimum wage to \$13.00 per hour effective July 1, 2025, to \$14.00 per hour effective July 1, 2026, to \$15.00 per hour July 1, 2027, and thereafter be adjusted annually for inflation; providing employees the ability to accrue up to 56 hours of paid sick leave per year if their employers have 15 employees or more; providing employees the ability to accrue up to 40 hours of paid sick leave if their employers have under 15 employees; and to prohibit employers from compelling employees to attend meetings regarding religious or political matters that are unrelated to their work."



A "YES" VOTE SUPPORTS:

- Increase minimum wage to \$15 per hour
- Employees SAVE up to 56 hours of paid sick leave per year (15 employees or more)
- Employees SAVE up to 40 hours of paid sick leave (15 employees)
- Employers cannot take action against employees who refuse to attend work- sponsored political or religious events



A "NO" VOTE OPPOSES:

- Increase minimum wage to \$15 per hour
- Employees saving up to 56 hours of paid sick leave per year (15 employees or more)
- Employees saving up to 40 hours of paid sick leave (15 employees)
- Employers cannot take action against employees who refuse to attend work- sponsored political or religious events

SUPPORTING

Better Jobs for Alaska is leading the campaign in support of the initiative. Also in support includes the **Sixteen Thirty Fund** and **Alaska AFL-CIO**, which is a prominent union in the state. Spokesperson for **Better Jobs for Alaska** argues that the odds are stacked against workers in Alaska as the cost of living continues to increase with no change in wages [1]. An additional barrier includes paid sick days. Per the organization, a vast majority of Alaskans do not get paid sick days, so working parents must choose between sending a sick kid to school or missing a day's pay.¹ President of Alaska AFL-CIO **Joelle Hall** weighed in on the issue stating that, "This ballot initiative will bring a small amount of relief to people, so they can earn the right to stay home with a sick child or to stay home when they're sick themselves". [1]

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Approving this amendment would impact families in a number of ways. First, by increasing the minimum wage we may start to see families having a better grasp on being able to keep up with inflation and rising costs of living. The gap between wages and the cost of basic living expenses widens each year [2]. By increasing the minimum wage every year for the next three years, we may see impacts in food insecurity, well-being, and overall personal freedom. Accruing sick leave for Alaskans would also allow those who are sick to be sick as well as give security to parents to take care of their children lest they fall ill. Lastly, prohibiting employers from holding meetings on religious and political beliefs may give employees the autonomy to feel safe in what they hold. Due to these meetings, many employees may have to relinquish their personal morals at the sake of maintaining a job to support their family. This may also present an opportunity for parents to teach their children the importance of self-thought.

OPPOSING

Ballotpedia did not locate a campaign in opposition to the ballot measure and neither did independent research on the topic. However, board member of the Alaska Gold Communications, **Greg Sarber** expressed opposition to the ballot measure, citing California as an example where the state passed a similar new minimum wage law that went into effect on April 1, 2024 [1]. Sarber expresses concern with the measure arguing that over 10,000 low-wage workers have been fired from their jobs because their employers could not afford to pay the new higher wage or found cheaper alternatives like automation to replace workers since the law was enacted [1]. He fears that such a law in Alaska would hurt employees rather than help them, putting them out of work and into the unemployment line [1].

ARIZONA

PROPOSITION 138: WAGES FOR TIPPED WORKERS

SUPPORTING

State Senator **Javan Daniel Mesnard** (R) and State Representative **Justin Wilmeth** (R) have both expressed their support for this ballot measure agreeing that the restaurant industry is a very small profit industry [1]. With a disparity in a forced raise of costs for a business, they will either shut down, limit staff, or make other alternatives.

OPPOSING

Opponents of the bill include Raise the Wage Arizona and the attorney for One Fair Wage AZ, **Jim Barton**. Barton argues that restaurants need to use the tips that the servers earn to cover their responsibility to pay the worker as a good business should be able to afford to pay their workers a fair share [1].

PROPOSITION 138

LEGISLATIVELY REFERRED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

"Shall have the effect of amending the Arizona Constitution to allow employers to pay employees up to 25% less than the minimum hourly wage if the employer can establish that the employee's wage plus tips or gratuities is at least \$2 more than the minimum wage for every hour worked."

A **"YES"** vote shall have the effect of amending the Arizona Constitution to allow employers to pay employees up to 25% less than the minimum hourly wage if the employer can establish that the employee's wage plus tips or gratuities is at least \$2 more than the minimum wage for every hour worked.

A **"NO"** vote shall have the effect of maintaining the current laws regarding minimum wage

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The amendment would allow for tipped workers to be paid 25% less per hour than the minimum wage if any tips received by the employee were not less than the minimum wage plus \$2 for all hours worked [1]. Currently, businesses in Arizona can pay tipped workers \$11.35, which is \$3 less than the current minimum wage of \$14.35, as long as their take-home pay, including tips, amounts to the minimum wage [1]. Under this new amendment, businesses would be able to pay workers \$3.58 (25%) less than the current minimum wage of \$14.35, which is \$10.77, provided that the total take-home pay of each worker is at least the hourly minimum wage plus \$2 for each hour worked.

Seventy percent of minimum wage workers hold roles in the service industry across the nation, but make most of their income from tips rather than their base pay from their employer [2]. For wait staff as an example, the median share of hourly earnings that come from tips account for 58.5% overall, encompassing more than half of daily earnings [3]. Decreasing the percentage of tips given to employees directly may potentially lead to a decrease in overall earnings and family incomes, inversely impacting the number of those under the poverty line. Those in these roles may be forced to work additional and longer hours to make up for what was lost, also directly affecting time spent in the home.

CALIFORNIA

PROPOSITION 32, \$18 MINIMUM WAGE INITIATIVE



- **Current Law:** The minimum wage is \$15/hour for large businesses and \$14/hour for smaller ones, set to reach \$15 by 2023.
- **Proposed Change:** Raise the minimum wage to \$18/hour by 2026, with future adjustments for inflation.

SUPPORTING

Supporters of CA Proposition 32 include **Joe Sanberg**, the entrepreneur who originally filed the ballot initiative, and labor organizations such as **One Fair Wage**, and the **California Labor Federation**. They highlight how earnings have not increased proportionally with the cost of living, contributing to many Californians' dependence on tax-funded social services, including SNAP and Medicaid [1, 2]. Supporters also often emphasize the significant contributions of minimum wage workers in essential industries. For example, Sanberg states, "We can all agree that Californians who work hard, working full time or more, should not live in poverty. But that's exactly how millions of Californians are living because their wages are too low to afford how expensive life has become in California" [2].

OPPOSING

Opponents include several lobbying groups, including the **California Restaurant Association**, **California Chamber of Commerce**, and **National Federation of Independent Business**. Jennifer Barrera, CEO of the California Chamber of Commerce, summarized one of the organizations' primary arguments against CA Proposition 32, saying that the increased tax burden associated with passing the ballot measure will "contribute to inflation, add to the high cost of living in California, and hurt state revenues" [3]. They contend that family-owned small businesses would be at risk of financial loss due to the rise in operating costs. Opponents also argue that the decision to increase wages should be determined by individual businesses, not voters. For instance, the state director of the National Federation of Independent Business stated, "Let the market dictate this and let's stop sending the message that mediocrity is a pathway to professional success in California" [1].

PROPOSITION 32

INITIATED STATE STATUTE

"Existing law requires annual increases to California's minimum wage until it has reached \$15.00 per hour for all businesses on January 1, 2023. This measure extends these annual increases (\$1.00 per year) until minimum wage—currently, \$15.00 per hour for businesses with 26 or more employees, and \$14.00 per hour for smaller businesses—reaches \$18.00 per hour. Thereafter, as existing law requires, the minimum wage will annually adjust for inflation. In periods of decreased economic activity, or General Fund deficit, the Governor may suspend annual increase up to two times, thereby extending timeline for reaching \$18.00 per hour.

A "yes" vote supports increasing the state minimum wage to \$18 per hour by 2026 for all employers and thereafter adjusting the rate annually by increases to the cost of living.

A "no" vote opposes this ballot initiative, thereby maintaining the existing law which was designed to increase the minimum wage to \$15 per hour for all employers by January 2023 and increasing it annually according to inflation" [1]

MASSACHUSETTS

QUESTION 5, MINIMUM WAGE FOR TIPPED EMPLOYEES INITIATIVE

QUESTION 5

INDIRECT INITIATED STATE STATUTE

"The proposed law would require employers to continue to pay tipped workers the difference between the state minimum wage and the total amount a tipped worker receives in hourly wages plus tips through the end of 2028. The proposed law would also permit employers to calculate this difference over the entire weekly or bi-weekly payroll period. The requirement to pay this difference would cease when the required hourly wage for tipped workers would become 100% of the state minimum wage on January 1, 2029. Under the proposed law, if an employer pays its workers an hourly wage that is at least the state minimum wage, the employer would be permitted to administer a "tip pool" that combines all the tips given by customers to tipped workers and distributes them among all the workers, including non-tipped workers.

A "YES" vote supports gradually increasing the wage of tipped employees until it meets the state minimum wage in 2029 and continues to permit tipping in addition to the minimum wage. A "NO" vote opposes gradually increasing the wage of tipped employees until it meets the state minimum wage in 2029." [1]

- **Current Law:** The minimum wage is \$6.75 for tipped employees and \$15 for others. Employers must make up the difference if tips don't meet the \$15/hour minimum.
- **Proposed Change:** Gradually raise the minimum wage for tipped employees to \$15/hour by 2029, eliminating tip credits but still allowing tipping.



SUPPORTING

One Fair Wage, a labor advocacy organization that has run campaigns to increase minimum wage rates across the country, is the primary supporter of Question 5. Their website highlights the staffing shortages that the restaurant industry has experienced since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the role of low wages in exacerbating the issue: "78% of workers state that the only reason they would stay in the industry is if they received a livable wage with tips on top" [2]. The ballot initiative has also received endorsements from **Senator Patricia D. Jehlen** (D) and **Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier** (D) [1].

OPPOSING

The **Committee to Protect Tips** and the **Massachusetts Restaurant Association** lead the opposition against Question 5, arguing that passing the ballot initiative will have negative financial consequences for tipped restaurant staff, restaurant owners, and consumers [1]. The CEO of the Massachusetts Restaurant Association, Steve Clark, contends that waitstaff will make dramatically less income, and that the rise in operating costs for restaurant owners will result in higher prices for meals, negatively impacting consumers. The Committee to Protect Tips argues that the existing system already ensures fair wages because of the mandated tip credit [1].

MISSOURI

PROPOSITION A: MINIMUM WAGE AND PAID SICK TIME INITIATIVE

TYPE OF BALLOT MEASURE: INITIATED STATE STATUTE

Official Ballot Summary [1]

A “YES” vote will amend Missouri statutes to increase the state minimum wage beginning January 1, 2025 to \$13.75 per hour and increase the hourly rate \$1.25, to \$15.00 per hour beginning January 2026. Annually the minimum wage will be adjusted based on the Consumer Price Index. The law will require employers with fifteen or more employees to provide one hour of paid sick leave for every thirty hours worked.

The amendment will exempt governmental entities, political subdivisions, school districts and education institutions from the minimum wage increase.

A “NO” vote will not amend Missouri law to make changes to the state minimum wage law.

If passed, this measure will have no impact on taxes.”

SUPPORT

There are a number of local Missouri organizations that support Proposition A, including but not limited to, the **League of Women Voters of Missouri**, **Missouri AFL-CIO**, and **Missouri Jobs with Justice Voter Action**. However, the campaign to support the initiative is led by the group, **Missourians for Healthy Families and Fair Wages**. [2] They have been endorsed by over 100 organizations that support Proposition A. [3]

On their website, **Missourians for Healthy Families & Fair Wages** explains that Proposition A would establish “commonsense policies for working families” by allowing hard-working Missourians to earn paid sick time off to care for themselves and their children. Furthermore, they explain that gradually raising the minimum wage in the state will support families to work towards better opportunities. [4] Additionally, although the opposition against Proposition A argues that voting yes on the ballot measure will create challenges for businesses, local Missouri business leaders have publicly explained that they recognize that raising the minimum wage can stimulate growth within the community by enabling people to participate in the economy with increased wages. [5]

OPPOSING

The main opposition of Proposition A is the **Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry**, and their argument is based on the idea that the government should not be involved in how businesses run and that paid sick leave provision conflicts with federal law. They also argue that raising the minimum wage benefits pushes young adults out of the job market and could create downstream effects that result in an increase in wages but lead businesses to cut costs in different ways. As explained in a local Missouri newspaper, the interim president and CEO of the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kara Corches, stated that “businesses should be the ones to decide the wage and benefits of their workers.”[6]

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

As of 2024, the Missouri minimum wage was \$12.30 per hour, and this was the minimum hourly rate that private businesses in the state were required to pay employees. However, a rate of \$12.30 per hour does not apply to public employees or tipped employees. For tipped employees, employers in Missouri must pay at least 50% of Missouri’s minimum wage, which was \$6.15 per hour in 2024. [7] If enacted, Proposition A would increase the household income of 137,000 parents and 338,000 children; therefore providing greater economic security to these families and addressing income inequality within the state. [8]

Furthermore, employers in Missouri are currently not required to offer paid sick leave to employees and it is up to the employer’s discretion whether they provide this benefit. [9] If successfully passed, Proposition A would require employers to provide employees with paid sick leave opportunities. [1] This would have a tremendous impact on family health by allowing employees to address personal and family health concerns without stringent workplace repercussions. As of now, there are 15 states in the United States that have some form of paid sick leave system in place. If Proposition A is passed, Missouri would become the 16th state to provide employees and their families with a legal system for paid sick leave. [10]

NEBRASKA

PAID SICK LEAVE INITIATIVE

TYPE OF BALLOT MEASURE: INITIATED STATE STATUTE

Official Ballot Summary

"The object of this petition is to enact a statute to provide eligible employees the right to earn paid sick time for personal or family health needs, to entitle those employed by employers with fewer than 20 employees to accrue and use up to 40 hours of earned paid sick time per year, to entitle those employed by employers with 20 or more employers to accrue and use up to 56 hours of earned paid sick time per year, to specify conditions for accruing and using earned paid sick time, to prohibit retaliation against an employee for exercising rights granted under the statute, to adopt certain notice and documentation requirements, and to establish enforcement powers and a civil cause of action for violations of the statute." [1]

SUPPORTING

Support for the ballot measure is led by the committee, **Paid Sick Leave for Nebraskans**, and they have garnered support from the **Nebraska AFL-CIO**, **ACLU of Nebraska**, **Planned Parenthood Advocates**, among other organizations [2]. As explained on their website, **Paid Sick Leave for Nebraskans** states that "It's time to support working Nebraskans" and explain that Nebraskans should not have to choose between a paycheck and the health of their family [3]. The committee released resource guides which outline Nebraska-specific facts about paid sick leave, such as an overview of employees without paid sick leave across industries (e.g. construction, accommodation/food service, manufacturing, etc.) [4]. They also developed a document which describes how paid sick leave is good for Nebraska businesses by increasing productivity and labor force participation, cost savings from greater workforce stability, injury and illness prevention, among other significant benefits [5].

OPPOSING

Those in opposition of the Paid Sick Leave Initiative include the **Nebraska State Chamber of Commerce**. In a local Nebraska newspaper, their Executive Vice President of Legislation and Policy, Alex Reuss, explained that they think a federal approach to paid sick leave would offer a more effective system for businesses to support their employees, rather than having inconsistencies among state laws [6]. Additionally, the President of the organization, **Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom**, Doug Kagan stated in a local newspaper that the decision to provide paid sick leave should be determined by private companies rather than through a government mandate. [7]

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

According to the 2021 Nebraska Benefits Report, which reported on benefits provided to employees in 2020, 56.6% of full-time employees and 11.6% of part-time employees had access to some paid sick leave benefits. Across industries, manufacturing (35.8%), retail (41.9%), and mining/quarrying/oil/gas extraction (44.3%) full-time employees were among those with the most limited opportunity for paid sick leave [4]. If the Paid Sick Leave Initiative is passed, all Nebraska businesses would be required to offer paid sick leave to their full-time, part-time, and temporary employees. Passage of this initiative could lead to significant changes for employees throughout the state [6]. However, factory, farm, and service workers are potentially those that could benefit the most, as employees from these industries have testified that they have lost their jobs due to missing work to care for sick children. This puts the health of the family at risk as employees often delay care or treatment for themselves or their loved ones, which could have significant health expenses and consequences. By enacting the Paid Sick Leave Initiative in Nebraska, employees could have more flexibility to seek preventive care and support familial health.



(08)

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ACCESS

Prepared by Ali DiOrio MPH, CHES, Gabriel Dogbanya MD, MPH + Kerra Mercon, MS

- Reproductive health access is an important and contentious issue for the 2024 election.
- Since the overturning of Roe v. Wade which protected abortion access until fetal viability, each state now can set its own restrictions about abortion and other reproductive services.
- The current legality of abortion varies across states from complete or 6-week bans to full access.
- Eleven initiated constitutional amendments are on the ballot in ten states including, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Montana, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, and South Dakota.
- In Illinois, a non-binding advisory question is on the ballot. This is an opportunity for legislators to understand public views on funding assisted reproductive services.
- All of the proposed amendments, if passed, will clarify policies on access to abortion in the state constitution except for an amendment in Nebraska that will prohibit abortion after the first trimester.

SOURCE DATA LISTED IN **RESOURCES** SECTION

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

KEY POINTS

SUPPORT

The ballot is supposed by Arizona for Abortion Access which is a group of organizations including ACLU of Arizona, Affirm Sexual and Reproductive Health, Arizona List, Healthcare Rising Arizona, Reproductive Freedom for All, and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Arizona. Supporters of Proposition 139 emphasize that pregnant people should make their own decisions about their reproductive health, including if and when to have a child, with the help and guidance of their physician. Furthermore, supporters admonish politician involvement in abortion care matters.[1-2]

OPPOSITION

The ballot is opposed by the Arizona Catholic Conference and the Arizona Right to Life.[2-3] Their primary argument is that the language opens opportunity to legalize abortion at any stage of pregnancy. The proposition's language of "medical professional" is also critiqued because it may allow those who are not physicians to perform abortion services. A campaign called "It Goes Too Far" also claims that the proposition could remove the requirement for parental consent for abortion, require taxpayers to pay for abortions, prevent passage of safety measures to reduce complications, and allow for abortion after viability.[4] The campaign also states concerns that healthcare providers would not be able to refuse to perform abortions "due to their consciences," which could potentially apply in emergent situations.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The impact of this proposition on families will be substantial. If the proposition passes, all people who can become pregnant will have a "fundamental right" to an abortion and the safeguards to prevent state interference. If the proposition does not pass, potential exists for a full abortion ban to be passed in Arizona. If abortion is illegal in Arizona, pregnant people will need to travel out of state to access care, creating economic hardship and increasing healthcare disparities between wealthy and less wealthy individuals. If the proposition fails and the current restrictions continue, some pregnant people will still need to travel out of state to receive abortions. Murky laws about exceptions only to prevent death or major bodily harm are confusing and difficult for providers to interpret, potentially leading to pregnant people suffering extreme pain, illness, or trauma before receiving care.

ARIZONA: PROPOSITION 139

THE RIGHT TO ABORTION INITIATIVE

Official Title

Amending Article II, Constitution of Arizona, by Adding Section 8.1; Relating to the Fundamental Right to an Abortion

Descriptive Title

Creates a fundamental right to abortion. Limits the state's ability to interfere with that right before fetal viability. After fetal viability, abortions are allowed when necessary to protect the life or health of the pregnant individual. Prohibits laws penalizing a person for assisting an individual obtaining an abortion.

A **"YES"** vote supports adding the right to abortion before fetal viability to the state constitution. Abortions can be performed before or after viability when a health care professional deems it necessary to protect the life or health of the pregnant person. The state cannot penalize anyone for aiding a person in obtaining an abortion.

A **"NO"** vote opposes adding the right to abortion to the state constitution and upholds current bans on abortion before viability. The state could further restrict or ban abortion at a later date.

KEY POINTS

SUPPORT

Supporters include Coloradans for Protecting Reproductive Freedom [1], a coalition which includes members from ACLU Colorado, Cobalt, Progress New Colorado, Interfaith Alliance, New Era Colorado, and Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights, among others.[2] Terms such as “right to abortion” and “shall not deny, impede, or discriminate” invoke strong feelings of personal liberty for supporters. Supporters believe inclusion of language on the right to an abortion protects rights of people who have state health insurance to access abortions, prevents government overreach, and protects freedom. The underlying belief of the supporters is that each person should be able to make personal and private healthcare decisions.

OPPOSITION

This ballot initiative is opposed by Pro-Life Colorado, March for Life Education and Defense, and Coloradans for the Protection of Women and Children. The opposition states that “radical groups want abortion in our constitution...and for you to pay for it,” emphasizing both the potential moral and fiscal effects of the amendment. The opposition believes that supporters of this amendment do not care about women, but rather the profits associated with providing abortion to women. [1] The opposition believes that providing abortion rights in the constitution harms a woman’s choice to continue her pregnancy.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The most significant impact on families will come from the provision of use of public funds. In 2022, the Colorado General Assembly passed the “Reproductive Health Equity Act,” giving every individual a fundamental right to contraception, pregnancy, and abortion and states that the fetus does not have independent or derivative rights under state law. [1] Currently, abortion is allowed at any stage of pregnancy. Enshrining the right to abortion in the state constitution would add further protections, especially because the members of the General Assembly change over time. Currently, no private insurance company is required to cover abortion, even though many do, but those on governmental insurance will not have coverage for an abortion outside of a life-threatening emergency, rape, or incest. [3] Allowing public funds to support abortion care would have a significant effect on access to abortion for those under public insurance. Because the Reproductive Health Equity Act is still in place, abortion is still protected even if this ballot initiative is not passed; however, pregnant people with public insurance will still be unable to get abortions if they cannot afford to pay for abortion care out of pocket.

COLORADO: AMENDMENT 47

THE RIGHT TO ABORTION AND HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

Shall there be a change to the Colorado constitution recognizing the right to abortion, and, in connection therewith, prohibiting the state and local governments from denying, impeding, or discriminating against the exercise of that right, allowing abortion to be a covered service under health insurance plans for Colorado state and local government employees and for enrollees in state and local governmental insurance programs?

A **"YES"** vote supports adding the right to abortion to the state constitution and allowing public funds to be used for abortion.

A **"NO"** vote opposes adding the right to abortion to the state constitution and repealing constitution language that bars use of public funds to be used for abortion.

KEY POINTS

SUPPORT

Supporters of Amendment 4 include Floridians Protecting Freedom [1], a group of more than 200 local and national advocacy organizations and health care providers who launched the Yes on 4 campaign to garner support for Amendment 4. Supporters emphasize abortion as reproductive healthcare and “defend the right to bodily autonomy” and to be “free of government intrusion.” Values listed by supporters include the freedom to make unique decisions, science-based treatment options, ability of providers to offer care, legal precedent, and the citizen ballot initiative process in Florida.

OPPOSITION

Opposers include Florida Voters Against Extremism, Keep Florida Pro Life, Do No Harm Florida, Life First PC, and Florida Freedom Fund. [2] The opposition believes that the passage of Amendment 4 could lead to “unrestricted abortion as a fundamental right...for virtually any reason, at any stage of pregnancy.” [3] The organizations’ use of terms such as “freedom” and “extremism” evoke concern among potential voters. The opposition is concerned that the ballot language is “deceptive” and “radical” because the Amendment uses the term healthcare provider rather than specifying medical doctor. The opposition is concerned that passage of the Amendment will go beyond restoring the protections under Roe v. Wade because of the Amendment’s vague language.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The impact of the passage of Amendment 4 would be significant for both Floridians and the neighboring states. In 2022, a 15-week abortion ban was signed into law, restricting abortion from viability to 15 weeks gestation. In May 2024, a 6-week abortion ban went into effect in Florida. [4] Until this point, Florida was a place for abortion access for many in neighboring states. Georgia also shares a 6-week ban, while Alabama and Mississippi have full bans. Currently, the closest state to Florida without an abortion ban is Virginia. [5] Passage of Amendment 4 would allow state residents, and people from other states in the South, a closer option for obtaining abortion care before viability and enshrine this right in the state constitution. If Amendment 4 is not passed, it is possible that Florida could pursue a full ban, further limiting healthcare options in the state.

FLORIDA: AMENDMENT 4

THE RIGHT TO ABORTION INITIATIVE

No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient’s health, as determined by the patient’s healthcare provider. This amendment does not change the Legislature’s constitutional authority to require notification to a parent or guardian before a minor has an abortion

A **"YES"** vote supports adding the right to abortion before viability to the state constitution, while maintaining parental notification for minors seeking abortions.



A **"NO"** vote opposes adding the right to abortion before viability to the state constitution.



KEY POINTS

SUPPORT

The Advisory Question had strong state governmental support, especially among Democrats. Illinois Senator Tammy Duckworth recently sponsored the Right to IVF bill to establish statutory right to access to IVF; however, this bill was blocked by Senate Republicans. [1] No other organizations have explicitly stated support for the Advisory Question.

OPPOSITION

Illinois Right to Life opposes the Advisory Question, citing that “in vitro fertilization is detrimental to the inherent value of life.” [2] The group holds religious views that believe that embryos created as part of the IVF process constitute life and are concerned that if this Advisory Question were to lead to binding law, then there is a risk of commodifying children. The group also worries that providing wider access to IVF would contribute to the destruction of embryos. The language used by the opposition draws voter attention to religious beliefs and personal morals and urges voters to vote against the advisory question.

ILLINOIS: ADVISORY QUESTION

THE ILLINOIS ASSISTED REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE ADVISORY QUESTION

“Should all medically appropriate assisted reproductive treatments, including, but not limited to, in vitro fertilization, be covered by any health insurance plan in Illinois that provides coverage for pregnancy benefits, without limitation on the number of treatments?” [3]

A **"YES"** vote supports advising officials to require Illinois insurance plans to financially support assistive reproductive treatments.



A **"NO"** vote opposes advising government officials about providing assistive reproductive care.



IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Because Advisory Questions are nonbinding, this vote will have little impact on families. If a “yes” vote led to eventual legislation enshrining the right to assistive reproductive technologies, families would have more opportunities to pursue fertility treatments due to the added insurance coverage.

KEY POINTS



SUPPORT

This amendment is supported by Governor Wes Moore (D), Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller (D), State Senator William Ferguson IV (D), State Representative Adrienne Jones (D), 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, Maryland AFL-CIO, Common Cause Maryland, Jewish Community Relations Council, and Pro-Choice Maryland. Supporters argue that state residents need a constitutional amendment to protect their right to reproductive liberty regardless of future Supreme Court action, other state legislative restrictions, or Maryland legislators. Supporters note the social, economic, and health benefits to state residents, families, and communities as well as the disproportionate impact of abortion bans and restrictions on people of color. [1]

OPPOSITION

This amendment is opposed by Health Not Harm MD, the Maryland Catholic Conference, Maryland Family Institute, the Maryland Right to Life PAC, Priests for Life, Students for Life, and The Hope Movement. Opponents express concern about the potential for abortion at any gestational age, how procedures will be paid for, and the ability of the state legislature to restrict access to abortion in the future. Others express concern that the amendment conflicts with their religious beliefs, beliefs about parental rights, and the belief that abortion care is not healthcare. [1] Despite this assertion, abortions are considered medical care and have an International Classification of Disease (ICD) code which health insurance companies use for billing.

MARYLAND: QUESTION 1

RIGHT TO REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM AMENDMENT

"The proposed amendment confirms an individual's fundamental right to an individual's reproductive liberty and provides the State may not, directly or indirectly, deny, burden, or abridge the right unless justified by a compelling State interest achieved by the least restrictive means." [2]

A 'yes' vote supports adding article 48 which establishes the right to reproductive freedom to the state constitution.



A 'no' vote opposes amending the state constitution and adding a new article that establishes the right to reproductive freedom.



IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The language used is inclusive of different gender and sexual identities and broadened reproductive freedoms to include additional reproductive health services beyond just abortion, such as contraception through the language "...including but not limited to the ability to make and effectuate decisions to prevent, continue...one's own pregnancy" which may broaden the appeal for the amendment [2]. Individuals and families may wish to have access to a range of reproductive healthcare options and the ability to make decisions about if, when, or how to have a family. Currently, abortion is legal in the state until fetal viability, however, this constitutional amendment will provide the highest level of access. [3]

KEY POINTS

SUPPORT

Supporters of the amendment include Missourians for Constitutional Freedom, the Democratic Party of Missouri, the ACLU of Missouri, the League of Women Voters of Missouri, and the Sixteen Thirty Fund. Supporters argue that decisions about abortion care should be between state residents, their families, and their healthcare providers rather than politicians. Supporters emphasize that decisions about reproductive health including abortion care are personal and private and should remain so but currently do not because of the state abortion ban. [1]

OPPOSITION

Opponents of the amendment include Missouri Stands with Women, U.S. Senator Josh Hawley (R), Missouri Catholic Conference, Missouri Right to Life, Priests for Life, and Students for Life Action. Opponents argue that supporters are “extremists”, and “radical”, and express concern that the amendment would endanger women and girls and violate parental rights by allowing gender-affirming surgeries on minors without their consent. The amendment does not include language that suggests this will occur. Some opponents also express concern that the amendment conflicts with their religious views and will make abortion available “on demand” at any gestational age. [1] The amendment states that the state may restrict abortion access after fetal viability.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Research suggests that access to abortion and eliminating discrimination in government programming, funding, or other activities will reduce barriers that typically marginalized communities face when seeking abortion care. The other health services mentioned, specifically prenatal care, childbirth including respectful birthing conditions, postpartum care, birth control, and miscarriage care could positively impact the health of pregnant people and their babies, reduce the risks of mortality and severe morbidity, and ultimately enhance the health and financial status of the whole family [2-5]. Additionally, other than neighboring Illinois, Missouri is surrounded by other states that restrict access to abortion and therefore families and neighboring states could benefit from this amendment too. [6]

MISSOURI AMENDMENT 3

RIGHT TO REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM INITIATIVE

“Do you want to amend the Missouri Constitution to: establish a right to make decisions about reproductive health care, including abortion and contraceptives, with any governmental interference of that right presumed invalid; remove Missouri’s ban on abortion; allow regulation of reproductive health care to improve or maintain the health of the patient; require the government not to discriminate, in government programs, funding, and other activities, against persons providing or obtaining reproductive health care; and allow abortion to be restricted or banned after Fetal Viability except to protect the life or health of the woman?” [1]

A **“YES”** vote supports amending the state constitution to include the right for reproductive freedom.



A **“NO”** vote opposes amending the constitution to include the right to reproductive freedom.



KEY POINTS

SUPPORT

Supporters of the amendment include Montanans Securing Reproductive Rights, U.S. Senator Jon Tester (D), Gubernatorial candidate Ryan Busse (D), the ACLU of Montana, Forward Montana, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Montana, The Fairness Project, and Think Big America. Supporters argue that abortion is medical care and that it is a private decision in which the government should not interfere. [1]

OPPOSITION

Opponents of the amendment include Governor Greg Gianforte (R), U.S. Senate Candidate Tim Sheehy (R), and the Montana Family Foundation. Opponents argue that the amendment would create a right to unlimited abortion including partial-birth or dismemberment abortion, neither of which are medical procedures, nor do they occur. Opponents also express concern that the term “reproductive rights” used in the amendment could mean gender-reaffirming care that could be irreversible and could have adverse effects on the body. [1] Gender-affirming care includes a wide range of interventions ranging from using the correct pronouns to puberty blockers to gender-affirming surgery. Research shows that individuals who receive gender-affirming care report significantly better mental health outcomes. [2]

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Currently, abortion is legal until fetal viability, however, the right to abortion depends on case law, specifically on the Constitution’s right to privacy provision. [1] This amendment would make the right to an abortion explicit within the constitution rather than relying on current case law. Removal of abortion restrictions and barriers can improve the health of the pregnant person, and their family including existing children, and address health inequities made worse by abortion bans. [3-5]

MONTANA: CI-128

RIGHT TO ABORTION INITIATIVE

“CI-128 would amend the Montana Constitution to expressly provide a right to make and carry out decisions about one’s own pregnancy, including the right to abortion. It would prohibit the government from denying or burdening the right to abortion before fetal viability. It would also prohibit the government from denying or burdening access to an abortion when a treating healthcare professional determines it is medically indicated to protect the pregnant patient’s life or health. CI-128 prevents the government from penalizing patients, healthcare providers, or anyone who assists someone in exercising their right to make and carry out voluntary decisions about their pregnancy.” [1]

A “yes” vote supports amending the state constitution to add abortion protections and allow restriction after fetal viability except to protect the health and life of the pregnant patient.

A “no” vote opposes amending the state constitution to include the above protections and restrictions.

KEY POINTS

The Nebraska Amendment, is a significant measure that would impact abortion regulations in the state. If passed, it would restrict abortions after the first trimester, which is generally understood to be up to 12 weeks of pregnancy. If the amendment passes, it could affect how and where women access abortion services, potentially leading to increased travel for those seeking procedures or impacting clinics that provide these services. It is also likely to face scrutiny in the courts, as it could be challenged on constitutional grounds. This amendment could spark substantial debate among Nebraska residents, as well as attract national attention and may influence voter turnout and could become a focal point in political discussions leading up to the election. The bill is supported by organizations such as Nebraska Catholic Conference, Nebraska Right to Life, Priests for Life and Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America.

NEBRASKA: INITIATIVE 434 PROHIBIT ABORTIONS AFTER THE FIRST TRIMESTER AMENDMENT

"The object of this petition is to amend the Nebraska Constitution to provide that except when a woman seeks an abortion necessitated by a medical emergency or when the pregnancy results from sexual assault or incest, unborn children shall be protected from abortion in the second and third trimesters." [3]

A "yes" vote supports amending the state constitution to prohibit abortions after the first trimester unless necessitated by a medical emergency or the pregnancy is a result of sexual assault or incest.

A "no" vote opposes amending the state constitution to prohibit abortions after the first trimester unless necessitated by a medical emergency or the pregnancy is a result of sexual assault or incest.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

This Nebraska ballot initiative is likely to impact access to abortion services, potentially creating obstacles. Women who need an abortion after the first trimester might face logistical challenges, including travel to states with more lenient abortion laws. It also has financial implications on family expenses. Travel expenses, additional medical costs, and the potential need for extended time off work can create financial strain on families. The health and safety concerns are also there as restrictions might lead some women to delay seeking care until they are beyond the first trimester, which could exacerbate health risks. The need for a more complex or costly procedure later in pregnancy might also arise. This issue has emotional and psychological effects and can impact family dynamics and individual well-being. The amendment could influence community services and support networks. Nonprofit organizations and clinics may need to adapt or increase their services to help families navigate the new legal landscape.

NEBRASKA: INITIATIVE 439

RIGHT TO ABORTION INITIATIVE

"The object of this petition is to amend the Nebraska Constitution to provide all persons the fundamental right to abortion without interference from the state or its political subdivisions until fetal viability, which is the point in pregnancy when, in the professional judgment of the patient's health care practitioner, there is a significant likelihood of the fetus' sustained survival outside the uterus without the application of extraordinary medical measures; or when needed to protect the life or health of the pregnant patient." [3]

A "yes" vote supports amending the state constitution to establish a right to abortion until fetal viability.

A "no" vote opposes amending the state constitution to establish a right to abortion until fetal viability.

KEY POINTS

The measure ensures healthcare access by ensuring the availability of services. Enshrining the right to abortion in the state constitution could make abortion services more accessible by ensuring that restrictions are minimized, improving access for individuals across the state. It also provides support for healthcare providers who would have clearer legal protections, potentially fostering a more supportive environment for offering reproductive health services. It also has social and political implications and moderates public debate on the issue while mobilizing advocacy groups on both sides of the issue. This could influence the political landscape and shape future political discourse.

Supporters such as Planned Parenthood, Advocates of Nebraska, Women, Fund of Omaha, Nebraska Civic Engagement Table, and Nebraska Appleseed argue for protecting rights because there are many reasons why someone may choose to seek an abortion and the government should not be involved in personal decisions.

Opposition led by Gov. Jim Pillen (R), U.S. Sen. Pete Ricketts (R), U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer (R), and Nebraska Right to Life opine the need to lay the ground for a society in which abortion is not an accepted answer to an unwanted pregnancy.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

This initiative will have varying effects on families and individuals in Nebraska. It provides access to healthcare, as it would ensure that individuals have legal access to abortion services, potentially reducing barriers related to cost, distance, and availability. This could lead to more timely access to care and improved access, both of which can be crucial for both physical and mental health of individuals in the family and the family as a unit. It also ensures support for providers by provision of legal protections for abortion services which might encourage more healthcare providers to offer these services, thus increasing availability. It has economic and financial implications due to abortion services being more accessible to families who hitherto would have experienced financial strain associated with traveling out of state or dealing with delayed care, which can be costly and potentially reducing the stress and uncertainty associated with navigating restrictive abortion laws.

KEY POINTS

SUPPORT

Supporters of the amendment include Vice President Kamala Harris (D), U.S. Senator Jacky Rosen (D), the ACLU of Nevada, Planned Parenthood Votes Nevada, Reproductive Freedom for All Nevada, and Think Big America. Supporters argue that constitutional protections are needed because abortion restrictions infringe on bodily autonomy and individual freedom. Supporters emphasize that it is appropriate to preserve these freedoms by including abortion access as a right in the state constitution. Supporters also say that abortion bans go against the will of the people and that Nevadans should have the opportunity to vote on this instead of having elected officials making these decisions. [1]

OPPOSITION

Opponents of the amendment include the Coalition for Parents and Children PAC, Nevada Right to Life, Priests for Life, and Students for Life Action. Opponents argue that the amendment is an attempt by Democrats to scare women and use the issue for political fodder and that the amendment is too broad and could cost taxpayer funds. Other opponents express concern that the amendment conflicts with their religious belief that life begins at conception. [1]

NEVADA QUESTION 6

RIGHT TO ABORTION INITIATIVE

“Should the Nevada Constitution be amended to create an individual’s fundamental right to an abortion, without interference by state or local governments, whenever the abortion is performed by a qualified healthcare professional until fetal viability or when necessary to protect the health or life of the pregnant individual at any point during the pregnancy?” [1]

A “yes” vote supports amending the state constitution to include a right to abortion with allowances for the state to restrict abortion access after fetal viability except to protect the health or life of the pregnant person.

A “no” vote opposes amending the state constitution to include the right to abortion.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Currently, abortion is legally accessible until 24 weeks gestation in Nevada. [2] However, this amendment protecting abortion access within the state constitution provides the highest level of protection of abortion rights, since Roe v. Wade is no longer in place. This amendment ensures access to abortion care for Nevadans and allows families to make health decisions that align with their values and needs. Additionally, families in the neighboring states of Idaho, Utah, and Arizona may benefit from access to abortion care as it is severely restricted in those states. [3]

KEY POINTS

The New York Proposal 1, the Equal Protection of Law Amendment enhanced protections as proponents argue it is crucial for reinforcing and expanding protections against discrimination and ensures everyone, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics, are treated equally under the law.[1] The proposal reflects the current issues on abortion rights and access, modernizing legal standards to better reflect contemporary values of equality and fairness and help address gaps in existing legal protections and strengthen the state's commitment to upholding civil rights. Public opinion on Proposal 1 is likely to be mixed, with some people strongly supporting the enhanced protections and others wary of the changes or their potential implications. The level of public awareness and understanding of the amendment will play a significant role in the debate, as voters consider how the proposal aligns with their values and perceptions of justice.[2,3]

SUPPORT for the measure is led by major politicians in the state such as Gov. Kathy Hochul (D), Sen Kirsten Gillibrand (D), U.S. Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D), and others. [4]

OPPOSITION is being led by the Coalition to Protect Kids-NY and State Sen. George Borrello (R), State Sen. Andrew Lanza (R) and State Asm. Christopher Tague (R). [3]

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The New York Proposal 1 benefits families by ensuring that all members are treated equally regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, or other characteristics. It ensures more inclusive environments in schools, workplaces, and public services. It is likely to enhance family dynamics as may support diverse family structures and relationships, helping to reduce discrimination that might affect family members, such as those in LGBTQ+ families or families of different racial or ethnic backgrounds. It ensures access to resources as families are likely to see improved access to educational and employment opportunities as discrimination barriers are reduced. This could lead to better economic stability and growth for families who might otherwise face biases. Equal access to opportunities and resources can contribute to greater financial and emotional stability within families.

NEW YORK: PROPOSITION 1

ABORTION; CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS; RACE AND ETHNICITY

"This proposal would protect against unequal treatment based on ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, and sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity and pregnancy. It also protects against unequal treatment based on reproductive healthcare and autonomy." [3]

A **"YES"** vote supports adding language to the New York Bill of Rights to provide that people cannot be denied rights based on their ethnicity, national origin, age, and disability; sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy.



A **"NO"** vote opposes adding language to the New York Bill of Rights to provide that people cannot be denied rights based on their ethnicity, national origin, age, and disability or sex, including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, pregnancy outcomes, and reproductive healthcare and autonomy date.



KEY POINTS

The Dakota Constitutional Amendment G, the Right to Abortion Initiative, is a significant and controversial measure that supports and advocates reproductive rights by enshrining the right to abortion in the state constitution, which safeguards access to abortion services in South Dakota, where abortion laws have been highly restrictive. The initiatives have health and safety implications ensuring that individuals have the right to make decisions about their reproductive health and access necessary medical care safely and legally. Opponents of the amendment often cite moral or ethical objections to abortion, arguing that the measure could undermine their values and beliefs about the beginning of life.

Supported by Dakotans for Health who are leading the campaign for the initiative, supported by former lawmaker Nancy Turbak Berry (D), and Organizations such as Doctors for Freedom and Freedom Amendment Coalition.

Opposition is led by Life Defense Fund, Vote No In November, Students for Life of America, and officials such as State Rep. Jon Hansen (R).

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

The South Dakota Constitutional Amendment G ensures access to reproductive health services which may have health and well-being implications for women and their families. Access to reproductive health services can have financial implications for families, including costs related to medical care, travel, and associated expenses. Enhanced access could reduce the financial burden associated with obtaining these services. By enshrining the right to abortion in the state constitution, the amendment could provide legal protections for individuals seeking reproductive health services, which may impact families' ability to make decisions about their reproductive health without facing legal obstacles. Families might benefit from greater social support and legal clarity regarding reproductive rights, which can influence their decision-making processes and overall family stability.

SOUTH DAKOTA: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT G

RIGHT TO ABORTION INITIATIVE

"This initiated amendment establishes a constitutional right to an abortion and provides a legal framework for the regulation of abortion. This framework would override existing laws and regulations concerning abortion.

The amendment establishes that during the first trimester a pregnant woman's decision to obtain an abortion may not be regulated nor may regulations be imposed on the carrying out of an abortion.

In the second trimester, the amendment allows the regulation of a pregnant woman's abortion decision, and the regulation of carrying out an abortion. Any regulation of a pregnant woman's abortion decision, or of an abortion, during the second trimester must be reasonably related to the physical health of the pregnant woman.

In the third trimester, the amendment allows the regulation or prohibition of abortion except in those cases where the abortion is necessary to preserve the life or health of the pregnant woman. Whether an abortion is necessary during the third trimester must be determined by the pregnant woman's physician according to the physician's medical judgment.

Judicial clarification of the amendment may be necessary. The Legislature cannot alter the provisions of a constitutional amendment." [3]

A **"YES"** vote supports amending the state's constitution to establish the right to an abortion.

A **"NO"** vote opposes amending the state constitution to establish the right to an abortion.



(9)

VOTING RIGHTS

Prepared by Gabriel Dogbanya, MD, MPH & Raya Francis, MS

- Several states have ballot initiatives addressing noncitizen voting.
- Voters in Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Wisconsin will decide on measures to explicitly ban noncitizens from voting in any election.
- Meanwhile, in Santa Ana, California, a ballot measure will allow voters to decide whether noncitizens should be permitted to vote in municipal elections.
- These initiatives reflect ongoing debates around immigration, voting rights, and citizenship requirements across the U.S.

SOURCE DATA LISTED IN **RESOURCES** SECTION

VOTING RIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

In the United States (U.S.), voting is considered a sacred right and a patriotic duty, symbolizing the core of democracy. Throughout history, the question of who should have the right to vote has evolved. One key issue is whether noncitizens should be allowed to participate in elections. Historically, noncitizens could vote in many elections until states began limiting voting rights to citizens by the early 20th century [1]. The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act made it a federal crime for noncitizens to vote in federal elections but left state and local election rules to individual states. In recent years, as debates about immigration have intensified, the issue of noncitizen voting has resurfaced. Supporters of non-citizen voting argue that it has historical precedent in the U.S. and can enhance community engagement. On the other hand, opponents raise concerns about noncitizens' loyalty and knowledge of U.S. laws and worry it could conflict with federal regulations or even encourage illegal immigration. As of 2024, seven states, Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Louisiana, North Dakota, and Ohio, have passed constitutional amendments explicitly banning noncitizen voting in all elections. In contrast, municipalities in California, Maryland, and Vermont, along with Washington, D.C., allowed noncitizens to vote in some local elections. In November, Santa Ana, California voters will decide on a ballot measure to allow noncitizens to vote in municipal elections. Conversely, voters in Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Wisconsin will decide on ballot measures banning noncitizen voting [2].

IDAHO [3]

IDAHO CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT FOR VOTING AMENDMENT

The Idaho Citizenship Voting Requirements for Voting Amendment is on the ballot in Idaho as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment on November 5, 2024. The measure would amend the Idaho Constitution to provide that only a citizen of the United States can vote in elections, rather than every citizen of the U.S.

A **"YES"** vote supports amending the Idaho Constitution to provide that only a citizen of the United States can vote in the state.

A **"NO"** vote opposes amending the Idaho Constitution to provide that only a citizen of the United States can vote in the state.

KEY POINTS

This measure follows the passage of the "Only Citizens Will Vote Act," signed by Governor Brad Little in July 2024 [4]. Although both federal law and Idaho's Constitution already limit voting to U.S. citizens in state and federal elections, this measure aims to ensure that no noncitizens can vote in local elections either. The measure was prompted by concerns over election integrity, particularly regarding discussions about certain local jurisdictions in other states allowing noncitizens to vote in specific elections, such as school board races. Supporters, led by the Idaho Republican Party, Heritage Action for America, Concerned Women for America, and the Tea Party movement, argue that this will reinforce trust in the electoral process.[5] In contrast, opposition from the Idaho Democratic Party, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Idaho, the League of Women Voters, and immigration advocacy groups views this as a response to unfounded fears, since Idaho already bars noncitizen voting in most contexts [5].



IOWA

IOWA AMENDMENT 1

IOWA REQUIRE CITIZENSHIP TO VOTE IN ELECTIONS
AND ALLOW 17-YEAR-OLDS TO VOTE IN PRIMARIES
AMENDMENT [6]

Iowa Amendment 1, the Iowa Requires citizenship to vote and allow 17-Year-Olds to Vote in Primaries Amendment is on the ballot in Iowa as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment on November 5, 2024. The measure would amend the Iowa Constitution to state that only a citizen of the U.S., rather than every citizen of the U.S., can vote and provide that 17-year-olds who will be 18 years old by general election may vote in Primaries.

A **"YES"** vote supports prohibiting local governments from allowing noncitizens to vote by providing in the state constitution that only a citizen of the U.S., rather than every citizen of the U.S., can vote; and supports allowing 17-year-olds who will be 18 by the general election to vote in primary elections.

A **"NO"** vote opposes prohibiting local governments from allowing noncitizens to vote, thereby maintaining state constitutional language that says every citizen of the U.S., rather than only a citizen of the U.S., can vote; and opposes allowing 17-year-olds who will be 18 by the general election to vote in primary elections.

KEY POINTS

This ballot measure involves two key components. First, the "Requirement of Citizenship for Voting" reinforces that only U.S. citizens can vote in elections. While U.S. citizenship has always been a prerequisite for voting, this measure would explicitly enshrine this requirement in the Iowa State Constitution, which could be seen as a move to ensure clarity and avoid potential legal ambiguities. The second component, "Allowing 17-Year-Olds to Vote in Primaries," permits 17-year-olds to vote in primary elections if they turn 18 by the time of the general election. This provision aims to engage younger voters earlier in the electoral process and could potentially increase voter participation rates among young adults. Overall, this amendment ensures legal and procedural clarity and aims to solidify existing practices. It could also address concerns about noncitizen voting and promote youth engagement in the electoral process, encouraging greater political involvement among younger citizens.

The amendment has significant political and social impacts. Depending on the political climate and the perspectives of various stakeholders, there could be differing opinions on these measures. Proponents may argue that the changes promote democratic participation and clarity, while opponents might raise concerns about the practicality or implications of such changes.

SUPPORT

This measure is supported by the State Republican Party and its legislators, along with conservative advocacy groups focused on strict voting regulations premised on election integrity.

OPPOSITION

In contrast, the opposition, led by the State's Democratic legislators, the ACLU of Iowa, the League of Women Voters, and youth advocacy groups, argues for voting access and views this measure as potentially discriminatory.

KEY POINTS

This ballot measure aims to reinforce clarity and precision regarding existing voting requirements. It explicitly enshrines the requirement that only U.S. citizens can vote in Kentucky elections. While citizenship has always been a prerequisite for voting in Kentucky, placing this requirement in the state constitution provides clear and unambiguous support for the practice. By codifying the citizenship requirement, the measure could reduce potential legal ambiguities and disputes regarding voter eligibility, streamlining election administration and helping prevent future legal challenges related to voter eligibility. This measure is likely a response to national and local debates about voter eligibility.

SUPPORT

Its support is spearheaded by State Senator Jason Howell (R) and State Representative Michael Meredith (R), both of whom argue that it is about protecting citizens. They cite concerns over what they have observed in other states, where local governments have changed their charters under similar constitutional language to allow noncitizens to vote in local elections [8].

OPPOSITION

In contrast, the amendment is opposed by State Sen. David Yates (D), who argues that there should be no fear regarding this issue, as the requirement is already established in Kentucky's constitution [8].

KENTUCKY

KENTUCKY CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 1 CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT FOR VOTING AMENDMENT [7]

Kentucky Constitutional Amendment 1, the Citizenship Requirement for Voting Amendment, is on the ballot in Kentucky as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment on November 5, 2024. The measure would amend the Kentucky Constitution to prohibit the state and local government from allowing noncitizen votes in the state. The ballot title is as follows: "Are you in favor of amending Sections 145 and 155 of the Constitution of Kentucky to prohibit persons who are not citizens of the United States from being allowed to vote in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, as stated below?"

A **"YES"** vote supports amending the constitution to require U.S. citizenship to be able to vote in the state.

A **"NO"** vote opposes amending the constitution to require U.S. citizenship to be able to vote in the state.





MISSOURI

MISSOURI AMENDMENT 7 REQUIRE CITIZENSHIP TO VOTE AND PROHIBIT RANKED-CHOICE VOTING AMENDMENT [9]

Missouri Amendment 7, the Require Citizenship to Vote and Prohibit Ranked-Choice Voting Amendment, is on the ballot in Missouri as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment on November 5, 2024. The measure would amend the Missouri Constitution to establish that only citizens of the U.S., rather than all citizens of the U.S., are entitled to vote. The measure would also amend the constitution to prohibit ranked-choice voting. The ballot title is as follows: "Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to 1) make the Constitution consistent with state law by only allowing citizens of the United States to vote; 2) prohibit the ranking of candidates by limiting voters to a single vote per candidate or issue; and 3) require the plurality winner of a political party primary to be the single candidate at a general election?"

KEY POINTS

The measure would amend Sections 2 and 3 of Article VIII and add a new Section 24 to the Missouri Constitution, enshrining citizenship requirements for voting. It also includes a prohibition on ranked-choice voting, a system that allows voters to rank candidates by preference rather than selecting just one.

SUPPORT

Supporters, led by State Sen. Ben Brown (R) and State Rep. Ben Baker (R), argue that this strengthens electoral integrity and maintains straightforward voting methods [10].

OPPOSITION

However, opposition from State Sen. Eric Woods and organizations like Kansas City Editorial Board which describes it as classic "ballot candy" as no evidence of non-citizen voting and could affect how various groups are represented [11].



YES VOTE

A "yes" vote amends the the state constitution:

- 1) provide that only U.S. citizens 18 years or older can vote (prohibiting the state or local governments from allowing noncitizen voting) 2) establish that each voter has one vote per issue or open seat.
- 3) prohibit ranked-choice voting 4) require plurality primary elections, where one winner advances to the general election.



NO VOTE

A "no" vote opposes this amendment, maintaining that "all citizens of the United States" who are 18 years of age or older may vote in elections and that ranked-choice voting may be enacted at the local or state level via ordinance or state statute.

NORTH CAROLINA

NORTH CAROLINA CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT FOR VOTING AMENDMENT [12]

The North Carolina Citizenship Requirement for Voting Amendment is on the ballot in North Carolina as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment on November 5, 2024. The measure would prohibit local governments from allowing noncitizens to vote by providing in the state constitution that only a citizen of the U.S., rather than every citizen of the U.S., can vote. The ballot title for the amendment is as follows: "Constitutional amendment to provide that only a citizen of the United States who is 18 years of age and otherwise possessing the qualifications for voting shall be entitled to vote at any election in this State."

A **"YES"** vote supports amending the state constitution to provide that only U.S. citizens, who are 18 years old or older can vote in elections.

A **"NO"** vote opposes amending the state constitution to provide that only U.S. citizens who are 18 years old or older can vote in elections, rather than every citizen.

KEY POINTS

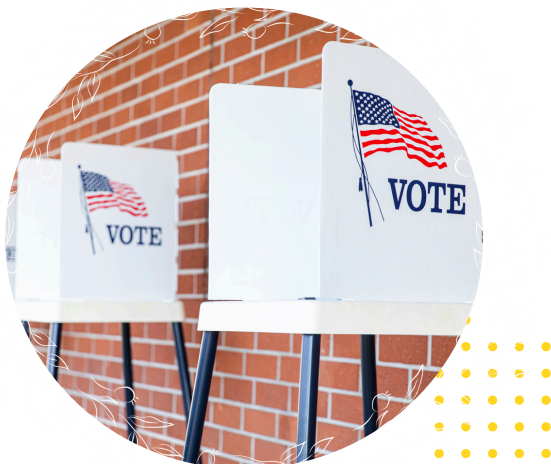
SUPPORT

Support for this proposed measure comes primarily from Republican (R) State Representatives, including John Bell, Karl Gillespie, Destin Hall, and nonpartisan State Rep. Timothy Moore. They argue that the current state constitution's language regarding voter eligibility is ambiguous and could potentially allow future courts to interpret it in ways that would expand voting rights beyond what is currently intended. For example, State Rep. Destin Hall (R-87) expressed concern that the constitution's language may serve as a "floor" rather than a "ceiling" for who can vote, indicating that the state needs clearer limitations to prevent future misinterpretation. Their argument appeals to voters concerned about potential legal loopholes in voting laws and the integrity of elections. They aim to convince voters by framing the issue as one of future-proofing the Constitution against unintended expansions of voter eligibility [12].

OPPOSITION

Opposition to the measure is led by Democratic officials, such as State Rep. Mary Harrison, and organizations like Common Cause North Carolina. Critics argue that the measure addresses a non-existent problem and could discourage new citizens from participating in elections. State Rep. Harrison (D-61) argued that the measure is creating a situation where it may deter new citizens from voting. Furthermore, Ann Webb of Common Cause North Carolina claimed that it spreads misinformation about election integrity, fostering division and an environment conducive to prejudice and violence. Their messaging appeals to voters by emphasizing that the measure is unnecessary and harmful, aiming to protect the inclusiveness of the electoral process [12].

Both sides express why voters should agree with them by focusing on the future impacts of the measure. Supporters focus on preventing potential legal issues, while opponents highlight the risk of undermining voter confidence and inclusivity.





OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT FOR VOTING AMENDMENT [13]

The Oklahoma Citizenship Requirement for Voting Amendment is on the ballot in Oklahoma as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment on November 5, 2024. The measure would prohibit local governments from allowing noncitizens to vote by providing in the state constitution that only a citizen of the U.S., rather than every citizen of the U.S., can vote. The ballot question for the measure is as follows: "Constitutional amendment to provide that only a citizen of the United States who is 18 years of age and otherwise possessing the qualifications for voting shall be entitled to vote at any election in this State. Shall the proposal be approved?"

A **"YES"** vote supports amending the state constitution to provide that only U.S. citizens, who are 18 years old or older can vote in elections.



A **"NO"** vote opposes amending the state constitution to provide that only U.S. citizens who are 18 years old or older can vote in elections, rather than every citizen.



KEY POINTS

SUPPORT

Supporters of this measure include Republican officials such as State Senator Micheal Bergstrom, State Rep. Charles A. McCall, and organizations like the Association of Mature American Citizens. They argue that the measure is necessary to safeguard the integrity of the state's elections and prevent future confusion about who is eligible to vote. Senator Bergstrom emphasized that constitutional language should be clear to avoid any possible misinterpretation down the road. Similarly, State Election Board Secretary Paul Ziriaux pointed out that although noncitizens currently cannot vote, this measure could protect against future reinterpretations of the law. The Association of Mature American Citizens framed the measure in the context of the national immigration debate, suggesting that the "worst border crisis in American history" increases the threat of noncitizen voting. These arguments appeal to voters by emphasizing election security and integrity and the potential risks of voter fraud at the state and federal levels if noncitizens are allowed to vote [13].

OPPOSITION

On the opposing side, Democratic officials such as State Sen. Mary Boren and State Sen. Carri Hicks are critical of the measure. Sen. Hicks (D-40) argued that the measure addresses a non-existent problem since it is already a felony for noncitizens to register to vote in Oklahoma. She views it as a political maneuver rather than a necessary reform. Similarly, Sen. Boren (D-16) suggested that the measure is driven by political and financial motivations, claiming it is a tool to generate revenue for political operatives by stirring up voters. Their arguments focus on the measure being unnecessary and politically motivated, appealing to voters by questioning the legitimacy of the problem it seeks to address and criticizing it as a distraction from real issues [13].

Both sides express their positions in ways that reflect broader concerns. Supporters highlight the need for proactive measures to protect election integrity, while opponents question the necessity and motives behind the proposal.



SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA

SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA, MEASURE DD
NONCITIZEN VOTING IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS
AMENDMENT [14]

Santa Ana Measure DD, the Noncitizen Voting in Municipal Elections Amendment, is on the ballot in Santa Ana, California as a legislative referral on November 5, 2024. The ballot question for Measure DD is as follows: "Shall the City of Santa Ana City Charter be amended to allow, by the November 2028 general municipal election, noncitizen City residents to vote in all City of Santa Ana municipal election?"

YES/NO VOTE

A "yes" vote supports this charter amendment to allow non-citizen residents of Santa Ana to vote in municipal elections. A "no" vote opposes this charter amendment to allow non-citizen residents of Santa Ana to vote in municipal elections.

KEY POINTS

SUPPORT

- Supporters of this measure include Santa Ana Councilmembers Benjamin Vazquez and Johnathan Ryan Hernandez, Santa Ana Unified School District Board Member Katelyn Brazer Aceves, and Senior Staff Attorney of the American Civil Liberties Union, Julia Gomez. They advocate for giving all Santa Ana residents, including non-citizens, the right to vote in city elections. They argue that non-citizens have long been active contributors to the community, paying taxes, owning property, running businesses, and raising families in Santa Ana. These residents, who make up about a quarter of the population, currently have no say in decisions that directly impact their lives. Supporters believe this measure will empower non-citizens to participate in the democratic process, leading to a more inclusive and representative local government. They anchor their arguments in historical precedent, noting that many states and territories once allowed non-citizens to vote, and a 2023 court ruling confirmed that charter cities like Santa Ana can legally expand voting rights to non-citizens in local elections. These arguments encourage voters to view this as a necessary step for a stronger, more inclusive Santa Ana. [14]

OPPOSITION

In contrast, opponents of the measure, including Santa Ana Mayor Valerie Amezcua and veteran and former City Councilmember Nelida Mendoza, raise significant concerns about its potential financial impact on the City. They argue that the initiative if enacted, would lead to severe budget deficits, increased bureaucracy, and legal challenges. They highlight that the city would bear an unfunded liability of up to \$10 million annually, a cost that could force cuts in critical services such as public safety, emergency services, and infrastructure maintenance. Furthermore, they stress that this financial burden could result in higher taxes and utility rates, exacerbating the city's existing economic challenges. The opponents express their views by emphasizing the practical implications of the measure, asserting that while the initiative may be well-intentioned, it could lead to unforeseen negative consequences. They argue for a vote against the measure to preserve fiscal stability and ensure that essential city services remain intact, positioning the initiative as a threat to the city's ability to maintain economic stability. [14]

KEY POINTS

BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

Supporters of this measure include State Rep. Adam Morgan (R-20), who argued that although initial claims of non-citizen voting were dismissed as non-issues, it was later revealed that state agencies had been sending voter registration forms to non-citizens. Representative Morgan's claims led South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster (R) to request an investigation from the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division. Governor McMaster's request confirmed the integrity of the state's voter registration system, countering claims of unlawful activity and reinforcing that existing policies are effective in preventing non-citizens from voting. The measure appears to have bipartisan support, as two Democratic senators and one independent senator voted against it when it was introduced in the Senate. At the same time, the House passed it with zero votes against it. Senator Josh Kimbrell (R-11), the amendment's author, emphasizes the overwhelming bipartisan support for the resolution, presenting it as a non-partisan effort to protect election integrity. By focusing on unity across party lines, supporters aim to convince voters that the measure is a universally accepted solution rather than a partisan issue [15].

A **"YES"** vote supports amending the state constitution to add language that only U.S. citizens who are 18 years old or older can vote in elections.



A **"NO"** vote opposes amending the state constitution to add language that only U.S. citizens who are 18 years old or older can vote in elections, rather than every citizen.



SOUTH CAROLINA

SOUTH CAROLINA CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT FOR VOTING AMENDMENT[15]

The South Carolina Citizenship Requirement for Voting Amendment is on the ballot in South Carolina as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment on November 5, 2024. The measure would prohibit local governments from allowing noncitizens to vote by providing in the state constitution that only a citizen of the U.S., rather than every citizen of the U.S., can vote. The ballot question for the measure is as follows: "Must Section 4, Article II of the Constitution of this State, relating to voter qualifications, be amended so as to provide that only a citizen of the United States and of this State of the age of eighteen and upwards who is properly registered is entitled to vote as provided by law?" [10]





WISCONSIN

WISCONSIN CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT FOR VOTING AMENDMENT [16]

The Wisconsin Citizenship Voting Requirement Amendment is on the ballot in Wisconsin as a legislatively referred constitutional amendment on November 5, 2024. The measure would amend the Wisconsin Constitution to add language to provide that "Only a United States citizen age 18 or older who is a resident" may vote in a national, state, or local office or statewide or local ballot measure election. The amendment would also add definitions for local office, national office, referendum, and state office in the state constitution. Currently, the constitution states that "Every United States citizen age 18 or older who is a resident of an election district" is a qualified voter. The ballot question for the measure is as follows: "Shall section 1 of article III of the constitution, which deals with suffrage, be amended to provide that only a United States citizen age 18 or older who resides in an election district may vote in an election for national, state, or local office or at a statewide or local referendum?"

KEY POINTS

Supporters of the proposed measure include State Sen. Julian Bradley (R-28), State Rep. Tyler August (R-32), and State Rep. Jim Steineke (R-5). They argue the measure is a necessary step to protect the fundamental right to vote from being undermined by non-citizens. Sen. Bradley points to examples of municipalities in Maryland where similar language has not prevented "illegal immigrants" from voting, framing the measure as a straightforward solution to a significant problem. Rep. August emphasizes the sanctity of the voting right for U.S. citizens and the importance of ensuring that citizen votes are not "canceled" by the votes of non-citizens. Their arguments aim to convince voters of the urgency and necessity of the measure by highlighting perceived threats to voting rights and invoking examples of similar issues elsewhere [16].

Opponents of the measure include State Rep. Greta Neubauer (D-66) and organizations such as the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, Souls to the Polls WI, and the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign. Nick Ramos, the executive director of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, argues that despite numerous systems and procedures to prevent noncitizens from voting, lawmakers continue to push for changes to the state constitution. He believes these efforts are driven by conspiracy theories rather than evidence from experts. Ramos argued that adding new language to the constitution is unnecessary and disrespectful, as the existing language clearly defines eligible voters and should remain unchanged. Rep. Neubauer contends that the amendments are driven by misinformation and a broader Republican effort to enshrine partisan agendas into the state constitution, circumventing the traditional lawmaking process. Their reflections emphasize the adequacy of current laws and the potential negative consequences of amending the constitution, aiming to persuade voters that the measure is both unnecessary and politically motivated [16].

YES/NO VOTE

A **"YES"** vote supports this amendment to add language to the Wisconsin Constitution that only U.S. citizens who are 18 years old or older can vote in federal, state, local, or school elections.

A **"NO"** vote opposes this amendment to add language to the Wisconsin Constitution that only U.S. citizens who are 18 years old or older can vote in federal, state, local, or school elections.

IMPACT ON FAMILIES

Restricting noncitizen voting

For citizen families, limiting voting to U.S. citizens could result in policies regarding taxes, wages, and public assistance that better reflect their interests and needs, directly impacting their income and access to social programs. Proponents of restricting noncitizen voting argue that this helps protect citizen families by ensuring that decisions about funding for schools, healthcare, and public services are made by those who are fully invested in the country. This could lead to more consistent and reliable resources for citizen families. Additionally, prioritizing voting for citizens may result in policies focusing more on public safety concerns, potentially improving law enforcement and other safety measures that directly affect families [1,2].

For noncitizen families, restrictions on noncitizen voting would exclude them from local decision-making processes, denying them a voice in crucial areas like public education, healthcare, and housing policies. Despite their contributions through taxes and labor, this exclusion could lead to feelings of powerlessness. Moreover, the inability to vote may diminish noncitizen families' motivation to engage in local governance and civic activities, ultimately weakening their sense of belonging and investment in the community. Economic and social marginalization may follow, as policies shaped solely by citizen voters may fail to address the unique needs of noncitizen families, resulting in gaps in social services or resources essential for their economic and social stability. Additionally, restricting noncitizen voting rights could create barriers to integration, preventing families from influencing policies that affect their pathways to citizenship, education, and economic opportunities. This lack of representation can adversely impact their health, as decisions made without their input may lead to insufficient healthcare access and support systems, exacerbating health disparities within noncitizen communities [1,2].

Allowing noncitizen voting

If the ballot measure allowing noncitizens to vote in Santa Ana passes, citizen families opposing the measure might experience a range of impacts. Some may feel that allowing noncitizen residents to vote in municipal elections dilutes their voting power or undermines the value of citizenship. This perception could lead to concerns about policy decisions favoring noncitizen interests over those of citizen families, particularly in areas like public services, education, and local resource allocation. Citizen families opposing the measure may also experience heightened tensions within the community, as differing views on noncitizen voting could create divisions. This polarization might diminish opportunities for collaboration and shared problem-solving between citizen and noncitizen families, potentially undermining the sense of community cohesion [2,14].

From a community engagement perspective, noncitizen families would gain a voice in local governance, influencing decisions on public health, education, and safety—areas that directly affect their lives. Economically, the measure may empower noncitizen residents who contribute to the community through taxes and local businesses, fostering greater investment in the city's development. With noncitizen families able to vote, local leaders may become more attuned to the diverse needs of the entire community, leading to policies that address the unique challenges faced by both citizen and noncitizen families. This inclusion could strengthen community ties and encourage collaboration between groups, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and cohesive environment [1,2].

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