

# 2014 Ballot Propositions

By John G. Matsusaka

*Voters looked favorably on ballot propositions in 2014, approving 67 percent of the 158 measures they decided. Marijuana advocates scored important victories in Alaska, Oregon and Washington, D.C., and minimum wage advocates continued their unbroken run of successful measures in five more states.*

## Overview

Voters decided 158 propositions in 2014, with 146 appearing on the Nov. 4 ballot. The total number of propositions was down 15 percent from the 186 propositions in 2012, well below the recent high point of 235 propositions in 1998, and the lowest total in an even-numbered year in the 21st century. The approval rate of 67 percent matches the approval rate in 2002 and 2004, which are the highest in the 21st century.

The propositions were distributed across 42 states. The most active state was Louisiana, where voters approved six of 14 proposed constitutional amendments. Other busy states were North Dakota, with nine propositions, and Missouri and New Mexico, both with eight propositions.

Most propositions (111) were placed on the ballot by state legislatures. These “legislative measures” were mostly bond proposals and constitutional amendments, both of which require popular approval in many states. Forty propositions were placed on the ballot by citizen petition; of these, 35 were “initiatives,” meaning proposals of new laws, while five were “referendums,” meaning proposals to repeal laws passed by the legislature. There were also five advisory propositions, one proposition placed on the ballot by a state commission and one proposition calling for a constitutional convention that was required by the state constitution. See Table A for a summary of propositions by state and type in 2014, Table B for a year-by-year breakdown of ballot proposition activity since 2000, and Table C for a complete list of propositions decided in 2014.

## Initiative Trends

Typically, the most visible and controversial propositions are initiatives. Initiatives usually attract the lion’s share of campaign contributions as well. Advocates view the initiative process as an important supplement to representative democracy that

allows citizens to counteract the influence of special interests on elected officials, while opponents view the process as increasing the influence of wealthy and organized interest groups that can fund petition drives and the subsequent election campaigns.

The initiative, together with the referendum and recall, were quintessential Progressive-era reforms. South Dakota was the first state to adopt the process, in 1898, followed by Utah in 1900 and Oregon in 1902. By 1918, 19 states had adopted the process, and adoption has continued at the rate of about one state every 20 years. Mississippi was the last state to adopt the initiative process, in 1992, bringing the total number of states that allow initiatives to 24.<sup>1</sup> The initiative process is widely available in states west of the Mississippi, but it is not a purely Western phenomenon. Some initiative states are in the Northeast (Maine, Massachusetts), South (Arkansas, Florida), and Central regions (Michigan, Ohio).

The total count of 35 initiatives in 2014 was down 30 percent from the 50 initiatives in 2012, and the lowest total in an even-numbered year since 1974, when only 19 initiatives reached the ballot. The number of initiatives in 2014 also was well below the peak number of 93 in 1996 during the last big initiative wave. The approval rate for initiatives in 2014 was 46 percent, above the long run historical average of 40 percent.

Initiative use overall appears to be waning from its peak in the mid-1990s for reasons that are not immediately apparent. Figure A shows the number of initiatives by decade, beginning in 1904 when the first initiatives appeared on the ballot in Oregon. Initiatives were common in the first four decades of the 20th century, particularly in the Progressive era that preceded the Great Depression. Many initiatives during this period were fueled by tensions between the new urban majorities in

**Table A: State-by-State Totals for 2014**

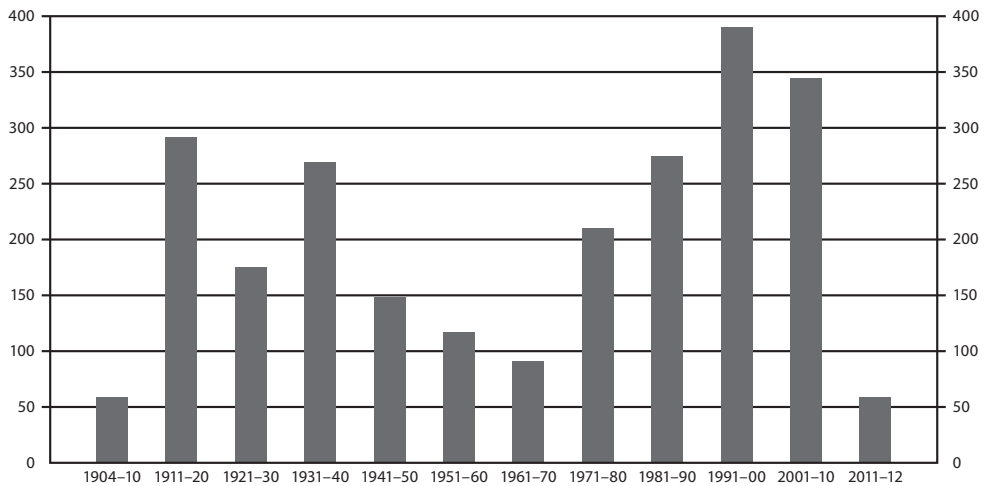
State	Initiatives	Legislative measures	Referendums	Advisory	Other	Total	Issues
Alabama (a).....	...	6 (6)	...	...	...	6 (6)	Sharia Law; right to bear arms; right to hunt and fish
Alaska (b).....	3 (3)	...	1 (1)	...	...	4 (4)	Legalized marijuana; minimum wage
Arizona.....	...	2 (2)	...	...	1 (0)	3 (2)	State enforcement of federal health plan
Arkansas.....	2 (1)	3 (3)	...	...	...	5 (4)	Alcohol sales in counties; minimum wage
California (c).....	3 (1)	4 (4)	1 (0)	...	...	8 (5)	\$7.72 billion bonds; rainy day fund; health insurance rates
Colorado.....	4 (1)	...	...	...	...	4 (1)	GMO food; abortion ban; wagering on horse races
Connecticut.....	...	1 (1)	...	...	...	1 (1)	Absentee voting
Florida.....	2 (1)	1 (0)	...	...	...	3 (1)	Medical marijuana
Georgia.....	...	3 (0)	...	...	...	3 (0)	Income tax limit
Hawaii.....	...	5 (3)	...	...	...	5 (3)	Bonds; mandatory retirement for judges
Idaho.....	...	1 (0)	...	...	...	1 (0)	Legislative approval of executive rules
Illinois.....	...	2 (2)	...	3 (3)	...	5 (5)	Victims' rights; minimum wage; school spending
Kansas.....	...	1 (1)	...	...	...	1 (1)	Charitable gambling
Louisiana.....	...	14 (6)	...	...	...	14 (6)	Health care trust funds
Maine.....	1 (0)	6 (6)	...	...	...	7 (6)	Hunting ban; bonds
Maryland.....	...	2 (2)	...	...	...	2 (2)	Transportation trust fund
Massachusetts.....	4 (2)	...	...	...	...	4 (2)	Casino gambling; mandatory sick leave; bottle deposit
Michigan (d).....	...	1 (1)	2 (0)	...	...	3 (1)	Wolf hunting; endangered species
Mississippi.....	...	1 (1)	...	...	...	1 (1)	Right to hunt and fish
Missouri (e).....	1 (0)	8 (5)	...	...	...	8 (5)	Right to farm; right to guns; sales tax surcharge; teachers
Montana.....	...	2 (0)	...	...	...	2 (0)	Voter registration deadline
Nebraska.....	1 (1)	...	...	...	...	1 (1)	Minimum wage
Nevada.....	1 (0)	2 (1)	...	...	...	3 (1)	Business tax increase; minerals taxes
New Jersey.....	...	2 (2)	...	...	...	2 (2)	Denial of bail
New Mexico.....	...	8 (8)	...	...	...	8 (8)	Bonds; school bond elections
New York.....	...	3 (3)	...	...	...	3 (3)	\$2 billion bonds; independent redistricting
North Carolina.....	...	1 (1)	...	...	...	1 (1)	Jury trials
North Dakota (f).....	4 (0)	5 (2)	...	...	...	9 (2)	Pharmacy ownership; initiative restrictions
Ohio (g).....	...	1 (1)	...	...	...	1 (1)	\$1.875 billion bonds for transportation and water
Oklahoma.....	...	3 (3)	...	...	...	3 (3)	Homestead tax exemptions
Oregon.....	4 (2)	2 (1)	1 (0)	...	...	7 (3)	Marijuana legalization; \$4.3 billion bonds; GMO food
Rhode Island.....	...	6 (5)	...	...	1 (0)	7 (5)	Casino authorization; bond issues
South Carolina.....	...	2 (2)	...	...	...	2 (2)	Charitable raffles
South Dakota.....	2 (2)	1 (1)	...	...	...	3 (3)	Minimum wage; gambling; health insurance
Tennessee.....	...	4 (4)	...	...	...	4 (4)	Public funding of abortion; income tax limit
Texas.....	...	1 (1)	...	...	...	1 (1)	Rainy day fund
Utah.....	...	3 (3)	...	...	...	3 (3)	Lieutenant governor; tax commission membership
Virginia.....	...	1 (1)	...	...	...	1 (1)	Property tax exemption for soldiers
Washington.....	3 (2)	...	...	2 (2)	...	5 (4)	Gun purchase background checks; school spending
West Virginia.....	...	1 (1)	...	...	...	1 (1)	Tax break for Boy Scout camp
Wisconsin.....	...	1 (1)	...	...	...	1 (1)	Gas tax revenue
Wyoming.....	...	1 (0)	...	...	...	1 (0)	Nonresident trustees for state university
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>35 (16)</b>	<b>111 (84)</b>	<b>5 (1)</b>	<b>5 (5)</b>	<b>2 (0)</b>	<b>158 (106)</b>	

Source: Initiative & Referendum Institute ([www.iandrinstitute.org](http://www.iandrinstitute.org)).

Note: The table reports the total number of propositions during 2014. Except as noted below, all propositions appeared on the ballot on Nov. 4. The main entry is the number of propositions appearing; the number approved is in parentheses. For advisory measures in Washington, the proposition is classified as "approved" if the recommendation was to maintain the existing law. For referendums, "approved" means that voters approved the law in question. The "other" category includes an Arizona proposition placed on the ballot by a state commission and a Rhode Island proposition mandated by the state constitution.

Key:

- (a) One Alabama proposition appeared on the July 15 ballot.
- (b) The Alaska referendum appeared on the Aug. 19 ballot.
- (c) Two California legislative measures appeared on the June 3 ballot; both were approved.
- (d) Michigan had one legislative statute that was approved on the Aug. 5 primary election ballot.
- (e) Missouri had five amendments on the Aug. 5 ballot, of which three were approved.
- (f) North Dakota voters approved on legislative amendment on June 10.
- (g) Ohio's Issue 1 appeared on the May 6 ballot.

**Figure A: Number of Initiatives by Decade**

Source: Initiative & Referendum Institute ([www.iandrinstute.org](http://www.iandrinstute.org)).

many states and the rural interests that still controlled state legislatures because district lines were not regularly redrawn to accommodate population changes. Initiative activity tailed off in the middle decades of the 20th century, with a trough of only 89 measures from 1961 to 1970. Beginning in the late 1970s, initiative use picked up again, following California's Proposition 13 in 1978 that set off a national tax revolt. Each successive decade after Proposition 13 set a new record for the number of initiatives, peaking with 394 from 1991 to 2000. Voters have decided 96 initiatives so far in the current decade, well below the pace in the preceding two decades.

In terms of individual states, Oregon remains the overall leader, having voted on 367 initiatives since adopting the process in 1902. California is a close second with 357 initiatives since adopting the process in 1911. Rounding out the top five are Colorado with 224, North Dakota with 192, and Washington with 174. Initiative activity remains particularly high in the Western half of the country. East of the Mississippi River, Arkansas has voted on 123 initiatives, the most of any state. In the 21st century, California leads with 88 initiatives, followed by 64 in Oregon, 49 in Colorado and 46 Washington. These patterns highlight that the West Coast, particularly the Pacific states, have become

the country's clear leaders in the practice of direct democracy to the point that citizen lawmaking is seen as a central feature of the political process in those states.

### Multistate Issues

Every year, some issues appear on the ballot in multiple states. This may happen as a result of a coordinated campaign by an interest group, or more often, as individual states respond to a common event, such as a court ruling, or learn from each other. Multistate issues can take on a life of their own and spread across the country if they meet with voter approval initially and reveal unexpected popular support for an issue. For this reason, multistate issues are worth watching as possible leading indicators of national trends.

### Marijuana

Perhaps the biggest ballot proposition story of the year was the approval of initiatives to legalize recreational use of marijuana in Alaska, Oregon and Washington, D.C. Alaska's Measure 2, which legalized possession of 1 ounce of marijuana and manufacture and sale of the drug, was approved by a margin of 53-47; Oregon's Measure 91, which legalized possession of up to 4 ounces of marijuana and charged the state with regulating the sale of

**Table B: Number of Ballot Propositions by Year Since 2000**

Year	All	Initiatives	Referendums	Legislative	Other
2000	239	76	6	151	6
2001	39	4	0	35	0
2002	224	51	5	164	4
2003	68	7	0	61	0
2004	176	64	3	108	1
2005	45	18	1	26	0
2006	226	79	4	142	1
2007	43	2	2	39	0
2008	168	68	6	90	4
2009	32	5	3	24	0
2010	184	46	4	130	4
2011	34	10	2	22	0
2012	187	48	14	122	3
2013	31	3	0	23	5
2014	158	35	5	111	7
2000–2014	1,854	516	55	1,248	35

Source: Initiative & Referendum Institute ([www.iandrinstitute.org](http://www.iandrinstitute.org)).  
 Note: “Other” includes propositions placed on the ballot by commissions, constitutions, or statutes.

the drug, was approved by a margin of 56-44; and the District of Columbia’s Initiative 71, which legalized possession of up to 2 ounces of marijuana and called on the city council to regulate sales, was approved by a huge margin, 70-30.

Coming on the heels of successful legalization initiatives in Colorado and Washington in 2012—and the medical marijuana campaigns that have legalized marijuana for medical uses in almost half of the states—the status of marijuana has been transformed in just a few years. The country (or at least parts of the country) appears to be moving in a libertarian direction on marijuana.

Even the solitary setback for marijuana advocates in 2014 reveals growing support for legalization. In Florida, Amendment 2, which would have permitted use of marijuana for medical purposes, received 58 percent of the votes in favor, but it failed to gain approval because the state requires 60 percent approval for constitutional amendments. The remarkable success rate for legalization initiatives so far is likely to encourage proponents

to try to expand the legalization beachhead, with the remaining West Coast state of California a natural next step.

The legal status of the various laws permitting marijuana use is somewhat ambiguous. The initiatives all conflict with federal law that still criminalizes possession and sale of the drug, and federal law is nominally supreme. Federal authorities, however, have not tried to enforce federal law in the states that have approved legalization, so there appears to be a willingness to defer to state law in these cases. The District of Columbia is a more complicated case because of Congress’ oversight role. Following passage of the initiative, Congress responded by prohibiting use of public funds to regulate marijuana. The status quo appears to be that possession and use is permitted in the city, but sales are not permitted.

The tendency for a successful initiative in one state to stimulate similar initiatives in other states has been often noted, with California’s tax-cutting Proposition 13 the most famous example. The spillovers,

which usually happen in adjoining states, appear to happen for two reasons. A successful vote in one state demonstrates the existence of an electoral constituency for an issue, which encourages interested groups to organize and fund a campaign. A successful initiative also has a demonstration effect once the policy is implemented.<sup>2</sup>

A primary concern in the minds of many citizens is the possibility that marijuana legalization will spur crime and create a population of addicts. In the few years since the first legalization, these fears have not come to bear in the adopting states; if this pattern continues, support is likely to grow for legalization in other states and nationally.

**Minimum Wage**

Voters in five states—Alaska, Arkansas, Illinois, Nebraska and South Dakota—approved proposals to increase the minimum wage. None of the elections were close, with an average margin of victory of 26 percent. The unbroken run of success for state-level minimum wage propositions in the 21st

**Table C: Complete List of Statewide Ballot Propositions in 2014**

<i>State</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Short description</i>
<b>Alabama</b>			
Amendment 1 (July 15)	L/CA	Approved 67-33	Allows cotton producers to opt out of promotion program.
Amendment 1	L/CA	Approved 72-28	Prohibits courts from recognizing Sharia Law.
Amendment 2	L/CA	Approved 51-49	\$50 million bond issue for national guard armories
Amendment 3	L/CA	Approved 72-28	Declares right to bear arms.
Amendment 4	L/CA	Approved 56-44	Requires 2/3 vote for school boards to increase spending.
Amendment 5	L/CA	Approved 80-20	Declares right to hunt and fish.
<b>Alaska</b>			
Ballot Measure 1 (Aug. 19)	R/ST	Approved 53-47	Approves law increasing oil and gas severance taxes.
Ballot Measure 2	I/ST	Approved 53-47	Legalizes recreational marijuana.
Ballot Measure 3	I/ST	Approved 70-30	Increases minimum wage.
Ballot Measure 4	I/ST	Approved 66-34	Requires legislative approval of sulfide mine.
<b>Arizona</b>			
Prop 122	L/CA	Approved 51-49	Declares state may refuse to enforce federal programs.
Prop 303	L/ST	Approved 78-22	Permits terminally ill patients to use experimental treatments.
Prop 304	Com/ST	Failed 32-68	Increases legislator salaries.
<b>Arkansas</b>			
Issue 1	L/CA	Approved 59-41	Allows legislature to reject administrative rules.
Issue 2	L/CA	Approved 53-47	Sets petition signature thresholds for insufficiencies to be corrected.
Issue 3	L/CA	Approved 52-48	Limits lobbying, establishes commission to set legislator salaries.
Issue 4	I/CA	Failed 43-57	Legalizes alcohol sales in all counties.
Issue 5	I/ST	Approved 66-34	Increases minimum wage.
<b>California</b>			
Prop 41 (June 3)	L/ST	Approved 65-35	\$600 million bond issue for low income veteran housing
Prop 42 (June 3)	L/CA	Approved 62-38	Eliminates requirement for state reimbursement of local government
Prop 1	L/ST	Approved 67-33	\$7.12 billion bond issue for water projects
Prop 2	L/CA	Approved 69-31	Increases rainy day fund.
Prop 45	I/ST	Failed 41-59	Allows insurance commissioner to set health insurance rates
Prop 46	I/ST	Failed 33-67	Requires drug testing of physicians
Prop 47	I/ST	Approved 60-40	Reduces sentences for certain crimes
Prop 48	R/ST	Failed 39-61	Reverses approval of tribal off-reservation casino
<b>Colorado</b>			
Amendment 67	I/CA	Failed 35-65	Defines "personhood" to outlaw abortion.
Amendment 68	I/CA	Failed 30-70	Permits gambling on horse races.
Prop 104	I/ST	Approved 70-30	Requires school district negotiations with unions to be public.
Prop 105	I/ST	Failed 35-65	Requires labeling of GMO food.
<b>Connecticut</b>			
Const. Amendment	L/CA	Failed 48-52	Enables absentee voting.
<b>Florida</b>			
Amendment 1	I/CA	Approved 75-25	Funds land acquisition trust fund.
Amendment 2	I/CA	Failed 58-42 (a)	Allows medical use of marijuana.
Amendment 3	L/CA	Failed 48-52	Allows governor to fill short-term judicial vacancies.
<b>Georgia</b>			
Const. Amendment 1	L/CA	Approved 74-26	Prohibits increase in income tax.
Const. Amendment 2	L/CA	Approved 70-30	Additional penalties for reckless driving.
Referendum Question A	L/ST	Approved 74-26	Tax exemption for student housing.

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table C: Complete List of Statewide Ballot Propositions in 2014, continued**

<i>State</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Short description</i>
<b>Hawaii</b>			
Const. Amendment	L/CA	Approved 88-12	Requires list of judicial nominees to be disclosed.
Const. Amendment	L/CA	Approved 55-45	Authorizes bonds for agriculture.
Const. Amendment	L/CA	Failed 23-77	Increases mandatory retirement age for judges from 70 to 80 years.
Const. Amendment	L/CA	Failed 45-55	Allows public funding of early childhood education.
Const. Amendment	L/CA	Approved 69-31	Authorizes bonds for dams and reservoirs.
<b>Idaho</b>			
HJR 2	L/CA	Failed 49-51	Allows legislature to reject agency rules.
<b>Illinois</b>			
CA 8.1	L/CA	Approved 78-22	Establishes rights for crime victims.
CA 8	L/CA	Approved 71-29	Declares right to vote.
Statewide Advisory Question	L/Adv	Approved 67-33	Increases minimum wage.
Statewide Advisory Question	L/Adv	Approved 66-34	Requires provision of birth control in health insurance plans.
Statewide Advisory Question	L/Adv	Approved 64-36	Requires more funding for school districts.
<b>Kansas</b>			
Constitutional Amendment	L/CA	Approved 75-25	Permits charitable raffles.
<b>Louisiana</b>			
Amendment 1	L/CA	Approved 56-44	Creates state medical assistance trust fund.
Amendment 2	L/CA	Approved 56-44	Creates hospital stabilization fund.
Amendment 3	L/CA	Failed 36-64	Allows designated agents to assist in tax sales.
Amendment 4	L/CA	Failed 32-68	Allows state funds to be used to capitalize infrastructure bank.
Amendment 5	L/CA	Failed 42-58	Removes mandatory retirement age for judges.
Amendment 6	L/CA	Approved 51-49	Permits Orleans Parish to increase property taxes.
Amendment 7	L/CA	Approved 74-26	Property tax exemption for disabled veterans.
Amendment 8	L/CA	Approved 57-43	Establishes artificial reef development fund.
Amendment 9	L/CA	Failed 47-53	Exempts disabled homeowners from certifying income.
Amendment 10	L/CA	Approved 54-46	Provides 18-month redemption period for tax sale property.
Amendment 11	L/CA	Failed 30-70	Increases number of executive departments.
Amendment 12	L/CA	Failed 41-59	Dedicates two positions on wildlife commission to specific parishes.
Amendment 13	L/CA	Failed 41-59	Authorizes New Orleans to sell specified property.
Amendment 14	L/CA	Failed 41-59	Prohibits tax legislation in even-numbered years.
<b>Maine</b>			
Question 1	I/ST	Failed 47-53	Limits bear hunting methods.
Question 2	L/ST	Approved 60-40	\$8 million bond issue for laboratory at state university.
Question 3	L/ST	Approved 62-38	\$4 million bond issue for loans to small businesses.
Question 4	L/ST	Approved 63-37	\$10 million bond issue for cancer research center.
Question 5	L/ST	Approved 51-49	\$3 million bond issue for biological lab.
Question 6	L/ST	Approved 65-35	\$10 million bond issue for water projects.
Question 7	L/ST	Approved 59-41	\$7 million bond issue for marine businesses.
<b>Maryland</b>			
Question 1	L/CA	Approved 82-18	Prohibits transfers from transportation fund.
Question 2	L/CA	Approved 81-19	Allows spending for special county elections.
<b>Massachusetts</b>			
Question 1	I/ST	Approved 53-47	Eliminates inflation indexing of gas tax.
Question 2	I/ST	Failed 27-73	Expands beverage container deposit law.
Question 3	I/ST	Failed 40-60	Prohibits casino gambling and wagering on dog races.
Question 4	I/ST	Approved 59-41	Mandates that employees receive 40 hours of sick time annually.

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table C: Complete List of Statewide Ballot Propositions in 2014, continued**

<i>State</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Short description</i>
<b>Michigan</b>			
Proposal 14-1 (Aug. 5)	L/ST	Approved 69-31	Adjusts tax on mobile business assets.
Proposal 14-1	R/ST	Failed 45-55	Authorizes open hunting season for wolves.
Proposal 14-2	R/ST	Failed 36-64	Authorizes hunting of currently protected animals.
<b>Mississippi</b>			
Initiative Measure 1	L/CA	Approved 88-12	Establishes right to hunt and fish.
<b>Missouri</b>			
Const. Amendment 1 (Aug. 5)	L/CA	Approved 50.1-49.9	Establishes right to farm and ranch.
Const. Amendment 5 (Aug. 5)	L/CA	Approved 61-39	Declares right to keep and bear arms.
Const. Amendment 7 (Aug. 5)	L/CA	Failed 41-59	Temporary sales tax increase.
Const. Amendment 8 (Aug. 5)	L/CA	Failed 45-55	Creates lottery program with revenue for veterans.
Const. Amendment 9 (Aug. 5)	L/CA	Approved 75-25	Protects electronic communication from searches.
Const. Amendment 2	L/CA	Approved 72-28	Makes criminal history admissible in sex crime cases.
Const. Amendment 3	I/CA	Failed 24-76	Requires teachers to be assessed based on performance.
Const. Amendment 6	L/CA	Failed 30-70	Allows pre-election voting.
Const. Amendment 10	L/CA	Approved 57-43	Restricts governors' budget authority.
<b>Montana</b>			
C-45	L/CA	Failed 48-52	Changes name of two state offices.
LR-126	L/ST	Failed 43-57	Changes date of close of voter registration.
<b>Nebraska</b>			
Initiative Measure 425	I/ST	Approved 59-41	Increases minimum wage.
<b>Nevada</b>			
Ballot Question 1	L/CA	Approved 54-46	Creates court of appeals.
Ballot Question 2	L/CA	Failed 49.7-50.3	Allows taxes on minerals and mining.
Ballot Question 3	I/ST	Failed 21-79	2% tax on business profits.
<b>New Jersey</b>			
Public Question 1	L/CA	Approved 62-38	Allows courts to deny bail.
Public Question 2	L/CA	Approved 65-35	Increases tax revenue dedicated to environment.
<b>New Mexico</b>			
Const. Amendment 1	L/CA	Approved 58-42	Separates school elections from other election days.
Const. Amendment 2	L/CA	Approved 65-35	Requires student on state board of regents.
Const. Amendment 3	L/CA	Approved 62-38	Allows legislature to set filing date for judge elections.
Const. Amendment 4	L/CA	Approved 59-41	Allows "urban counties".
Const. Amendment 5	L/CA	Approved 53-47	Regulates investment of land grant fund.
Bond Question A	L/ST	Approved 65-35	\$17 million bond issue for elderly facilities.
Bond Question B	L/ST	Approved 63-37	\$11 million bond issue for libraries.
Bond Question C	L/ST	Approved 60-40	\$141 million bond issue for schools.
<b>New York</b>			
Proposal 1	L/CA	Approved 58-42	Establishes independent redistricting commission.
Proposal 2	L/CA	Approved 77-23	Allows legislative bills to be in electronic form.
Proposal 3	L/ST	Approved 62-38	\$2 billion bond issue for schools.
<b>North Carolina</b>			
Const. Amendment	L/CA	Approved 53-47	Allows defendants to waive right to jury trial.

See footnotes at end of table.

**Table C: Complete List of Statewide Ballot Propositions in 2014, continued**

<i>State</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Short description</i>
<b>North Dakota</b>			
Const. Measure 1 (June 10)	L/CA	Approved 54-46	Allows less time for initiative petitions.
Const. Measure 1	L/CA	Failed 36-64	Declares right to life (bans abortion).
Const. Measure 2	L/CA	Approved 76-24	Prohibits mortgage taxes.
Const. Measure 3	L/CA	Failed 25-75	Creates full time higher education commission.
Const. Measure 4	L/CA	Failed 43-57	Prohibits initiatives from appropriating funds.
<b>Ohio</b>			
Issue 1 (May 6)	L/CA	Approved 65-35	\$1.875 billion bond authorization for roads and water.
<b>Oklahoma</b>			
State Question 769	L/CA	Approved 69-31	Allows officials to hold military positions.
State Question 770	L/CA	Approved 90-10	Expands tax break for veterans.
State Question 771	L/CA	Approved 90-10	Creates tax break for spouses of veterans.
<b>Oregon</b>			
Measure 86	L/CA	Failed 43-57	\$4.3 billion bond issue for college scholarships.
Measure 87	L/CA	Approved 58-42	Permits judges to work for state universities.
Measure 88	R/ST	Failed 34-66	Allows issuance of driver card to illegal immigrants.
Measure 89	I/CA	Approved 64-36	Guarantees equality of rights based on sex.
Measure 90	I/ST	Failed 32-68	Creates “top two” primary.
Measure 91	I/ST	Approved 56-44	Legalizes recreational marijuana.
Measure 92	I/ST	Failed 49.9-50.1	Requires labeling of GMO food.
<b>Rhode Island</b>			
Question 1	L/CA	Failed 56-44 (b)	Authorizes casino in Newport.
Question 2	L/CA	Approved 68-32	Requires local voter approval to relocate casinos.
Question 3	X	Failed 45-55	Calls a constitutional convention.
Question 4	L/ST	Approved 64-36	\$125 million bond issue for college of engineering.
Question 5	L/ST	Approved 61-39	\$35 million bond issue for arts.
Question 6	L/ST	Approved 60-40	\$35 million bond issue for mass transit.
Question 7	L/ST	Approved 71-29	\$53 million bond issue for water projects and zoo.
<b>South Carolina</b>			
Amendment 1	L/CA	Approved 83-17	Allows nonprofits to run raffles.
Amendment 2	L/CA	Approved 56-44	Makes adjutant general appointed rather than elected.
<b>South Dakota</b>			
Const. Amendment Q	L/CA	Approved 57-43	Allows casino gambling in Deadwood.
Initiated Measure 17	I/ST	Approved 62-38	Requires health insurance to include all willing providers.
Initiated Measure 18	I/ST	Approved 55-45	Increases minimum wage.
<b>Tennessee</b>			
Amendment 1	L/CA	Approved 53-47	Declares state is not required to fund abortions.
Amendment 2	L/CA	Approved 61-39	Allows governor to appoint judges to fill vacancies.
Amendment 3	L/CA	Approved 66-34	Prohibits income taxes.
Amendment 4	L/CA	Approved 70-30	Allows charitable lotteries.
<b>Texas</b>			
Const. Amendment	L/CA	Approved 80-20	Redirects oil and gas revenue to rainy day fund.
<b>Utah</b>			
Amendment A	L/CA	Failed 40-60	Eliminates bipartisan requirement for tax commission.
Amendment B	L/CA	Approved 56-44	Shortens term of appointed lieutenant governor.
Amendment C	L/CA	Failed 34-66	Allows legal counsels for three state offices.

See footnotes at end of table.



**Table C: Complete List of Statewide Ballot Propositions in 2014, continued**

<i>State</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Short description</i>
<b>Virginia</b>			
Const. Amendment	L/CA	Approved 87-13	Property tax exemption for spouses of veterans.
<b>Washington</b>			
I-1351	I/ST	Approved 51-49	Increases state education spending.
I-591	I/ST	Failed 45-55	Limits state-required background checks to buy guns.
I-594	I/ST	Approved 59-41	Extends firearm background checks.
Advisory Vote 8	Adv/ST (c)	Maintain 54-46	Maintain or repeal tax break for marijuana farming.
Advisory Vote 9	Adv/ST (c)	Maintain 55-45	Maintain or repeal higher leasehold excise taxes.
<b>West Virginia</b>			
Amendment 1	L/CA	Approved 62-38	Tax break for Boy Scout camp.
<b>Wisconsin</b>			
Question 1	L/CA	Approved 80-20	Prevents diversion of gas tax from transportation.
<b>Wyoming</b>			
Const. Amendment A	L/CA	Failed 30-70	Allows nonresident trustees for state university.

*Source:* Initiative & Referendum Institute.  
*Note:* An advisory vote is classified as “approved” if the majority recommendation is to maintain the existing law.  
*Additional Note:* A referendum is classified as “approved” if the challenged law was retained.

*Key:*  
 I – initiative                      ST – statute  
 L – legislative measure        Adv – advisory  
 Com – commission            X – constitution  
 CA – constitutional amendment  
 (a) Florida amendments require 60% approval to pass.  
 (b) Rhode Island’s Question 1 required approval in the city of Newport, which it did not receive.  
 (c) Washington requires advisory votes on legislative tax increases.

century now extends to 15 and includes both traditionally liberal and conservative states. At the local level, voters in Oakland and San Francisco also approved increases in the minimum wage. With voters displaying a healthy appetite for increasing the minimum wage, we can expect to see a continuing flow of similar proposals in the next few years.

Prior to Nov. 4, there was much discussion whether the minimum wage initiatives would attract Democratic voters to polls and help Democratic candidates in other elections. Democrats did not do particularly well in any of the minimum wage states, suggesting that spillover effects were minor or nonexistent. This reinforces the observation that ballot propositions have their own dynamics and rarely spill over into candidate elections in a material way. The absence of spillovers could be because the issue is not important enough to attract nonvoters to the polls, or because its appeal cuts across party lines and attracts both Democrats and Republicans. The large majorities in favor suggest minimum wage increases appeal to voters of both parties.

**GMO Foods**

One of the more interesting recent trends has been the emergence of genetically modified food as an issue in ballot proposition campaigns. These propositions are being promoted by groups opposed to genetically modified food; they do not seek to ban such food, but rather to require its labeling at the point of sale. The campaigns have been built around the idea that consumers have right to know what is “in” their food, but the long run hope apparently is that consumers will refuse to purchase GMO products, driving them from the market.

Voters rejected two GMO labeling initiatives in 2014. Colorado’s Prop 105 was turned down by a large margin, 35-65, while Oregon’s Measure 92 was defeated by a mere 837 votes out of total 1.5 million cast. These defeats follow the rejection of GMO labeling initiatives in 2012 in California (49-51) and in 2013 in Washington (49-51). (The first such initiative was Oregon’s Measure 27 in 2002 that was crushed 30-70.) These losses came after initial opinion polls suggested strong support for the ini-

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tiatives; it was only after intense campaigns that enough voters shifted their views to cause a defeat.

Opponents of these initiatives have outspent supporters, often by substantial margins. For example, supporters in Oregon spent about \$11 million compared to \$20 million spent by opponents. Most of the money on both sides has come from businesses with commercial interests at stake. In Oregon, “yes” funding came from Dr. Bronner’s Magic Soaps, an organic soap supplier, while much “no” funding came from Monsanto, DuPont, Pepsico, Coca-Cola and other food companies. In addition to heavy negative campaigning, voters appear to have been swayed by editorial opinions. Most newspapers in the initiative states have come out against GMO labeling, sometimes based on the risk of driving up food prices, but also based on questions about the underlying science and whether GMO foods ought to be demonized.

While the most recent results give GMO-labeling proponents a perfect record of futility, having lost all five elections, they may be poised for a breakthrough win in the near future. This possibility is suggested by the extremely narrow nature of the losses in California, Oregon and Washington, which suggest that opinion is divided closely enough that under the right conditions, GMO labeling can win. At the same time, even if GMO labelers achieve a success in the near future, because of the difficulty they are having in states that should be the most receptive to this idea, the potential for the idea to spread across the rest of the country seems limited.

### *Taxes*

Tax issues are the most common subject of ballot propositions historically. Fifteen tax-related measures were on the ballot this year. Voters across the nation showed an aversion to new taxes and a willingness to grant exemptions to narrowly targeted groups, such as spouses of veterans who die in the line of duty. Four states approved tax limitation amendments: Georgia voters approved 74-26 an amendment that prohibits any future increase in income tax rates; Tennessee voters approved 67-33 an amendment that bans state and local income or payroll taxes; North Dakota voters approved 76-24 an amendment to prohibit real estate transfer taxes; and Massachusetts voters approved 53-47 a proposal to stop indexing the gas tax. Nevada voters rejected 21-79 a proposal to impose a 2 percent tax on business profits, with the revenue dedicated to schools.

### *Bond Issues*

Many states require voter approval before state bonds can be issued. After a lull following the recession, legislatures are increasingly willing to request bond authorization from the voters, and voters seem amenable to taking on more debt. In 2014, legislatures placed 19 bond measures before the voters in nine states, with an aggregate value of \$16.4 billion. Voters responded by approving all but one proposal, for a total of \$12.1 billion.

The biggest proposal was California’s Proposition 1, which authorized a hefty \$7.12 billion for water projects; it was decisively approved by a 67-33 margin. Three other hefty bond proposals passed: New York voters approved \$2 billion for capital projects in schools; Ohio voters approved \$1.875 billion for transportation and water projects; and California voters approved \$600 million for housing for low-income veterans. Alabama (1), Maine (6), New Mexico (3), and Rhode Island (4) also approved one or more bond propositions each, mostly for smaller projects.

The only loser was Oregon’s Measure 86, which would have allowed the state to borrow \$4.3 billion to subsidize tuition for college students; voters rejected the measure by a 43-57 margin. Not only did Measure 86 propose an enormous amount of borrowing given the population of the state, but it also deviated from traditional budgeting principles that debt should be used for long-lived capital expenditures, not to fund transfers.

### *Gambling*

Another issue that was contested in multiple states in 2014 was gambling, with a total of 10 gambling-related propositions appearing in nine states. Voters in Kansas, South Carolina and Tennessee amended their constitutions to allow charitable and other nonprofit organizations to operate games of chance for small-scale fundraising. Voters in Rhode Island and South Dakota approved proposals to allow existing gambling operations—Newport Grand and Deadwood City, respectively—to offer a full menu of casino games. Gambling proposals fared worse in Colorado and Massachusetts, where proposals to allow wagering on dog races were rejected by large margins; and in Missouri, where voters rejected a proposal to add a new state lottery program with revenue dedicated to veterans programs. In California, voters repealed a gaming compact that would have allowed an Indian tribe to establish a casino outside the borders of its traditional reservation.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>For detailed information on initiative adoption and provisions and a discussion of pros and cons about the process, see John G. Matsusaka, *For the Many or the Few: The Initiative, Public Policy, and American Democracy* (University of Chicago Press, 2004) and M. Dane Waters, *Initiative and Referendum Almanac* (Carolina Academic Press, 2003).

<sup>2</sup>For rigorous evidence on how initiatives diffuse policy, with respect to tax-and-expenditure limits, see Ellen Moule and Nicholas W. Weller, “Learning in Laboratories of Democracy: The Diffusion of Political Information via Direct Democracy in the U.S. States,” *State Politics and Policy Quarterly*, 2011.

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## About the Author

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