

BALLOTWATCH

Overview

- 31 state-level propositions in 6 states, including 3 initiatives, 23 legislative measures, and 5 advisory measures.
- 81% of propositions approved.
- Hot issues: tax increases, genetically modified food, marijuana tax
- Bond issues: 5 proposals in Maine for a total of \$149.5 million, all approved.

ELECTION RESULTS 2013: LIMITED ACTION

It was a relatively quiet year for direct democracy, with only 31 statewide propositions going before the voters. While proposition activity is always muted in odd-numbered years, the 31 propositions is the lowest annual total for the 21st century. Voters approved 81% of the proposals.

Only six states held proposition elections in 2013, led by Texas with 9, Washington with 7, and New York with 6.

Three propositions were placed on the ballot by citizen petition ("initiatives"); the rest were placed on the ballot by state legislatures. Only six times in the last 50 years has the number of initiative been three or less: 1965, 1969, 1971, 1985, 1987, 2007.

Two propositions attracted significant interest nationwide:



Colorado Amendment 66. This initiative, sponsored by Democratic state senator Mike Johnston, proposed to increase the state income tax from 4.63% to 5.0%, and add a 5.9% bracket for incomes over \$75,000. It was expected to generate almost \$1 billion per year in revenue, which was dedicated to preschool and K-12 schooling. The initiative also required the state to allocate at least 43% of its total revenue to education, and excluded the new revenue from the state's spending limit. Supporters of Amendment 66 raised over \$10 million, with large chunks coming from donors outside the state, including New York mayor Michael Bloomberg, Bill and Melinda Gates, and the National Education Association. Supporters argued that education was underfunded, and that education spending was a good investment for the state economy. The opposition was disorganized and poorly funded. Arguments against Amendment 66 focused on the downside of a huge tax increase, particularly given the fragile state of the economy. Despite the extensive campaign in support, including backing by the state's Democratic governor, other Democratic officials in the state, and numerous school boards, voters soundly rejected the proposal, with 36% in favor and 64% opposed.

Washington I-522. This initiative proposed to require manufacturers to label any food that was genetically engineered, or contained or might contain ingredients that were genetically engineered. Supporters, which included an array of organic and natural food activists and businesses, argued that consumers have a right to know how their food is made, and that such labeling is available in many countries outside the United States. Opponents argued that labeling would be costly for consumers and provide no clear benefit, and that genetic engineering has had a significant positive impact on the world's food production. All major newspapers in the state opposed I-522. Campaign spending was at or near record levels for the state, with \$7 million spent in favor and more than \$20 million spent against; most of the money for and against was contributed by groups outside the state. The largest contribution to the yes campaign was \$2 million from Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps, a manufacturer and retailer of organic soaps. The no campaign received more than \$11 million from the Grocery Manufacturers Association, \$5 million from Monsanto, and \$4 million from Dupont. Despite leading in most pre-election polls, I-522 narrowly failed on Election Day, with 49% in favor and 51% opposed.

IRI

Initiative & Referendum Institute

University of Southern California
Gould School of Law
Los Angeles CA 90089-0071
Phone: 213.740.9690

www.iandrinstitute.org

USC University of
Southern California

STATE-BY-STATE LIST OF PROPOSITIONS

The remainder of this report contains a complete list of state-level propositions for 2013. An “initiative” is a citizen-sponsored law placed on the ballot by petition. “Legislative” measures were placed on the ballot by the legislature.

Colorado

- *Amendment 66. Income tax.* Initiative amendment that increases income taxes, establishes minimum spending levels for education, weakens spending limits. FAILED 36-64
- *Prop AA. Marijuana tax.* Legislative statute to tax marijuana sales. APPROVED 65-35

Maine

All five proposals were bond issues placed on the ballot by the legislature.

- *Question 1. \$14 million bond issue for Maine National Guard centers.* APPROVED 58-42
- *Question 2. \$15.5 million bond issue for University of Maine buildings.* APPROVED 61-39
- *Question 3. \$100 million bond issue for transportation projects.* APPROVED 72-28
- *Question 4. \$4.5 million bond issue for a science facility.* APPROVED 53-47
- *Question 5. \$15.5 million bond issue for community college buildings.* APPROVED 66-34

New Jersey

Both proposals were legislative constitutional amendments.

- *Public Question 1. Gambling.* Allows gambling fundraisers by veterans’ groups. APPROVED 81-19
- *Public Question 2. Minimum wage.* Set at \$8.25 per hour, indexes to inflation. APPROVED 61-39

New York

All measures were constitutional amendments placed on the ballot by the legislature.

- *Proposal 1. Casinos.* Allows legislature to authorize seven casinos. APPROVED 57-33
- *Proposal 2. Civil service.* Grants additional credit to disabled veterans. APPROVED 84-16
- *Proposal 3. Debt limits.* Exempts sewage debt from local limits. APPROVED 62-38
- *Proposal 4. Forest preserve in Long Lake.* Resolves competing title claims. APPROVED 73-27
- *Proposal 5. Mining.* Allows company to continue mining in forest preserve. APPROVED 53-47
- *Proposal 6. Judges.* Increases mandatory retirement age from 70 to 80. FAILED 42-58

Texas

All measures were constitutional amendments placed on the ballot by the legislature

- *Prop 1. Property tax.* Exemption for surviving spouse of military member. APPROVED 87-13
- *Prop 2. Constitution.* Eliminates obsolete text pertaining to medical board. APPROVED 85-15
- *Prop 3. Property tax.* Extends exemption for aircraft parts to be resold. APPROVED 58-42
- *Prop 4. Property tax.* Exemption for disabled veterans in donated house. APPROVED 85-15
- *Prop 5. Mortgages.* Permits reverse mortgages on home purchases. APPROVED 63-37
- *Prop 6. Water projects fund.* Creates fund using \$2 billion from rainy day fund. APPROVED 73-27
- *Prop 7. City council vacancies.* Procedures to fill vacancies. APPROVED 74-26
- *Prop 8. Constitution.* Repeals text pertaining to hospital district in Hidalgo Cty. APPROVED 72-28
- *Prop 9. Judicial misconduct.* Expands potential sanctions against judges. APPROVED 85-15

Colorado — Texas

STATE-BY-STATE LIST (CONTINUED)

Washington

I-517 and I-522 were initiative statutes. The other measures were advisory propositions placed on the ballot by I-960, an initiative approved in 2007 that requires an advisory vote any time the legislature increases or extends a tax, or removes a tax exemption. In advisory votes, voters are asked if they want to repeal or maintain the tax increase.

- *I-517. I&R petitions.* Sets penalties for interfering with or retaliating against petitioners; increases time to collect signatures. FAILED 37-63
- *I-522. GMO foods.* Requires genetically engineered foods to be labeled. FAILED 49-51
- *Advisory Vote 3. Excise tax.* Maintain or repeal law that removed credit for publicly owned property. MAINTAIN 52-48
- *Advisory Vote 4. Excise tax.* Maintain or repeal excise tax on air carriers. MAINTAIN 54-46
- *Advisory Vote 5. Insurance tax.* Maintain or repeal tax on insurance for pediatric services. REPEAL 40-60
- *Advisory Vote 6. Telecomm tax.* Maintain or repeal law that removed exemption for telecomm services. REPEAL 48-52
- *Advisory Vote 7. Estate tax.* Maintain or repeal estate tax on property worth \$4 million or more. MAINTAIN 51-49

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Please direct media inquiries to Gilien Silsby, Director of Public Relations, (213) 740-9690 (office), (213) 500-8693 (cell), gsilsby@law.usc.edu.

Washington