

# BALLOTWATCH

## Overview

- 27 ballot propositions in nine states; 22 propositions on November 7; five before November 7.
- Four initiatives, three advisory measures, and 18 legislative measures.
- Most propositions: Texas 7, Maine 5.
- 21 approved, 6 not approved.

## ELECTION RESULTS 2017

Voters decided 27 state-level ballot propositions in nine states in 2017, approving 21 of them. Two of four initiatives were approved. Four states approved bond issues, with an aggregate value of \$1.875 billion.

The overall number of propositions is comparable to the previous odd-numbered year, 2015, when there were 28 propositions nationwide. Still, this represents the smallest total in the 21st century.

Ballot propositions largely flew under the radar in 2017, as the Trump presidency seems to have sucked the oxygen out of the rest of politics. Perhaps the most high-profile measure was Maine's Question 2, an initiative that expanded Medicare coverage, in effect overriding GOP governor Paul LePage's five previous vetoes of similar legislation. The vote was seen by many as a referendum on the Affordable Care Act, which provided substantial federal subsidies to offset the expanded coverage. Proponents argued that the state would benefit from the influx of federal funds, and that expanding health coverage was simply the right thing to do. Opponents argued that the state share of the cost of expanded coverage would put too much stress on the state budget. Campaign spending was modest, just over \$2 million by the two sides combined. Voters decisively approved Question 2, with 59 percent in favor.

For additional information on ballot measures see [ballotpedia.org](http://ballotpedia.org) and [ncsl.org](http://ncsl.org).



### STATE-BY-STATE LIST

The remainder of this report contains a complete list of state-level propositions for 2017. An "initiative" is a citizen-sponsored law that is placed on the ballot by petition. Unless otherwise noted, propositions appeared on the November 7 ballot.

#### Louisiana (October 14)

All four propositions were constitutional amendments from the legislature.

- *Amendment 1. Property tax exemption for construction materials.* APPROVED 66-34
- *Amendment 2. Property tax exemption for spouse of first responder.* APPROVED 57-33
- *Amendment 3. Restricts gas tax revenue to transportation projects.* APPROVED 53-47

#### Maine

- *(June 13) Question 1. \$45 million bond issue for R&D.* Proposed by legislature. APPROVED 62-38
- *Question 1. Allows a certain company to operate casino.* Initiative. FAILED 17-83
- *Question 2. Expands Maine Medicare coverage.* Initiative. APPROVED 59-41
- *Question 3. \$105 million bond issue for transportation projects.* Proposed by legislature. APPROVED 72-28
- *Question 4. Allows more time to fully fund public pensions.* Proposed by legislature. APPROVED 63-37

#### New Jersey

Both proposals were from the legislature, the first a statute and the second an amendment.

- *Public Question 1. \$125 million bond issue for public libraries.* APPROVED 60-40
- *Public Question 2. Dedicates payments from environmental damages to natural resource repair.* APPROVED 69-31

IRI  
Initiative & Referendum Institute

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

[www.iandrinstitute.org](http://www.iandrinstitute.org)

USC UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

*Citizen lawmaking still  
slow: only 27  
propositions in nine  
states*

### **New York**

Proposal 1 was required by the constitution. Proposals 2 and 3 were legislative constitutional amendments.

- *Proposal 1. Hold a constitutional convention.* FAILED 17-83
- *Proposal 2. Reduces pension of convicted public official.* APPROVED 73-27
- *Proposal 3. Allows bike paths in forest preserves.* APPROVED 52-48

### **Ohio**

Both issues were initiatives, the first a constitutional amendment and the second a statute.

- *Issue 1. Expands rights for crime victims.* APPROVED 83-17
- *Issue 2. Limits amount state can pay for prescription drugs.* FAILED 21-79

### **Pennsylvania**

- *Proposed Constitutional Amendment. Increases allowable property tax exemption to 100% of value.* Proposed by legislature. APPROVED 54-46

### **Texas**

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

- *Prop 1. Tax exemption for property donated to spouse of disabled veteran.* APPROVED 86-14
- *Prop 2. Home equity loans.* Regulates fees, authorizes lenders. APPROVED 69-31
- *Prop 3. Limits service of officeholders once term expires.* APPROVED 83-17
- *Prop 4. Limits on courts.* Allows legislature to prescribe a waiting period before courts can rule on constitutionality of state laws. APPROVED 65-35
- *Prop 5. Allows charitable raffles by professional sports foundations.* APPROVED 60-40
- *Prop 6. Property tax exemption for spouse of first responder.* APPROVED 85-15
- *Prop 7. Credit union lotteries.* Permits lotteries to promote savings. APPROVED 60-40

### **Washington**

All three advisory measures were required by the state constitution: they asked voters whether to repeal or maintain a recently approved tax increase.

- *Advisory Vote 16. Commercial fishing fees.* REPEALED 54-46
- *Advisory Vote 17. Business and bottled water taxes.* REPEALED 62-38
- *Advisory Vote 18. Property tax.* REPEAL 59-41

### **West Virginia (October 7)**

- *Amendment 1. \$1.6 billion for roads.* APPROVED 73-27

\* \* \*

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