

# Arkansas panel rejects recreational marijuana ballot measure

August 4 2022, by ANDREW DeMILLO

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The State Board of Election Commissioners on Wednesday blocked a proposal to legalize recreational marijuana from appearing on Arkansas' ballot this fall.

The panel rejected the popular name and [ballot](#) title for the proposed constitutional amendment that supporters hoped to put on the November ballot. Supporters submitted more than enough valid signatures from registered voters to qualify, but the proposal still needed approval from by the board to appear on the ballot.

Arkansas voters in 2016 approved a constitutional amendment legalizing [medical marijuana](#). The proposed amendment would allow people age 21 and older to possess up to an ounce of cannabis and would allow state-licensed dispensaries to sell [recreational marijuana](#).

An attorney for Responsible Growth Arkansas, the group backing the proposal, said it would appeal to the state Supreme Court.

The panel rejected the measure after commissioners said they didn't believe the ballot title fully explained to voters the impact of the amendment. For example, commissioners said they were concerned that the amendment would repeal the state's current limit under its medical marijuana amendment on how much THC is allowed in edible marijuana products.

"If I'm a voter I might be all for this but I'd like to safeguard that edible

limit," Commissioner J. Harmon Smith said.

Responsible Growth Arkansas attorney Steve Lancaster said the the board's criticism was unfair because it would require the ballot title going into an unwieldy amount of detail.

"The type of detail that the board expected, or demanded in this case, would make our ballot title thousands and thousands of words long," Steve Lancaster told reporters after the vote. "That just simply is not workable for a ballot."

Recreational [marijuana](#) is already legal in 19 states, and legalization proposals are on the ballot this fall in South Dakota and Maryland. Supporters are also trying to get measures on the ballot in Missouri, North Dakota and Oklahoma.

Arkansas Republican Gov. Asa Hutchinson, who is a former head of the federal Drug Enforcement Administration, opposed the proposal. Democratic gubernatorial hopeful Chris Jones said Wednesday that he supports the measure. Republican nominee Sarah Sanders has not said where she stands on the issue. Hutchinson is term-limited and not seeking reelection in November.

The board also rejected a proposal that would scale back a casino gambling measure voters approved in 2018 by removing one of the four counties where a casino is allowed.

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