



The League of Women Voters  
of Missouri

# Statewide Ballot Issues

*August 5<sup>th</sup> 2014*

## **Proposition 1 - The Missouri Right-to-Farm Amendment**

In 2010, Missouri passed Proposition B, a voter approved initiative petition that limited the number of breeding dogs a business can own. It also set new requirements for cage space, feeding and veterinary care. Those opposed to Proposition B began working for Constitutional Amendment 1 shortly after B's passage. Voters must decide whether the state constitution should be amended to include "farmers' rights" by voting on the following ballot issue:

*“Shall Missouri law be amended to ensure that the right of Missouri citizens to engage in agricultural production and ranching practices shall not be infringed?”*

*The potential costs or savings to governmental entities are unknown, but likely limited unless the resolution leads to increased litigation costs and/or the loss of federal funding. If passed, this measure will have no impact on taxes.”*

If passed, the rights of Missourians to engage in farming and ranching practices would be guaranteed, subject to any power given to local government under Article VI of the Missouri Constitution.

Proponents say that farmers need to be protected from outside interest groups who threaten to regulate farming and ranching. They want to protect Missouri farmers from "environmental extremists." They also say that Missouri farmers and ranchers are knowledgeable in their practices and do not want or need additional regulations. They say that this amendment was worded in a general way to encompass all possible practices. If litigation should arise, a judge and jury would be able to make a fair and just decision depending on the circumstances. The amendment will save jobs, protect family farms from out-of-state animal-rights groups and protect small and family farmers who do not have the resources to mount legal challenges or relocate their farms like corporations can.

Opponents say that this amendment is vague and could favor corporate over Missouri family farms. It is the Tysons and industrial pork producers who would benefit from the amendment. It is unclear what "farming and ranching practices" are referred to. It may allow environmental damage because it would decrease regulation. State regulators would have more difficulty controlling super-food poisoning bugs created as a result of feeding antibiotics to livestock, large Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, and pet breeding facilities. Missouri's streams and rivers could be further polluted because of manure run off. The amendment could also result in high litigation costs for the state of Missouri.

***The League of Women Voters of Missouri opposes Proposition 1.***

## **Proposition 5 - Right to Bear Arms Amendment**

In 1999, Missouri voters rejected Proposition B, which would have authorized law enforcement to issue concealed weapons permits, but in 2003, the legislature enacted a law similar to what Proposition B would have allowed. In 2011, the legislature passed legislation to lower the concealed gun age from 23 to 21. In 2014, the Missouri Senate introduced Bill 613, which sought to nullify federal gun control laws, despite court rulings against such attempts. The legislature finally passed this amendment. Voters must decide whether Missouri would establish an unalienable right of citizens to keep and bear arms by voting on the following ballot measure:

*“Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended Include a declaration that the right to keep and bear arms is an unalienable right and that the state government is obligated to uphold that right?”*

*State and local governmental entities should have no direct costs or savings from this proposal. However, the proposal’s passage will likely lead to increased litigation and criminal justice related costs. The total potential costs are unknown, but could be significant.”*

If passed, the amendment would expand the right to keep and bear arms to include ammunition and related accessories for such arms. This amendment also removes the language “the right to keep and bear arms” does not justify the wearing of concealed weapons. The amendment does not prevent the legislature from limiting the rights of certain felons and certain individuals adjudicated as having a mental disorder. The measure will have no impact on taxes.

Proponents say that the right to keep and bear arms is a fundamental right and has been so since the founding of this country. Even though the Missouri Constitution already provides protections for the right to bear arms in defense of one's home, property and person, the amendment "would force courts to use a higher standard of review when considering constitutionality of gun controls."

Opponents say that this amendment will make it more difficult to reduce gun violence and enact local state and federal common-sense laws to reduce it. The repeal of the state's handgun purchaser licensing law has resulted in more murders. They also argue that a current constitutional provision allowing restrictions on concealed guns would be repealed.

*The League of Women Voters of Missouri opposes Proposition 5.*

## **Proposition 7 - Missouri Temporary Sales Tax for Transportation Amendment**

The state of Missouri has had responsibility for roads in the state even before it was a state, those responsibilities have evolved over the years. At first, each individual county was responsible for its roads. In 1921 the focus and responsibility for roads fell to the state. In 1956 Missouri was the first state to begin construction of the interstate highway system.

Constitutional Amendment 7 has been put before the voters by the Missouri General Assembly. Voters must decide if the state Constitution should be amended to increase the sales tax  $\frac{3}{4}$  ¢ for the next ten years:

*“Should the Missouri Constitution be changed to enact a temporary sales tax of three-quarters of one percent to be used solely to fund state and local highways, roads, bridges and transportation projects for ten years, with priority given to repairing unsafe roads and bridges?”*

*This change is expected to produce \$480 million annually to the state's Transportation Safety and Job Creation Fund and \$54 million for local governments. Increases in the gas tax will be prohibited. This revenue shall only be used for transportation purposes and cannot be diverted for other uses.”*

If passed the state sales tax will increase from 4.225 cents to 4.975 cents or 50 cents for each \$10.00 purchase. The tax will not be on groceries, medications, gasoline and other items now exempt from the sales tax. The proposed tax will raise \$480 million per year for state transportation and \$54 million per year for city and county transportation projects. The tax can be used for public transportation. The amendment prohibits toll roads and any tax increase on gasoline.

Proponents say that roads and bridges are in poor condition and need repair. The revenue from the gasoline tax is declining due to the increase in fuel efficient and hybrid cars on the road and is not enough for the repair and construction needed. The measure will increase jobs and the economy of the state. It will increase the safety of roads, highways, and bridges, and save lives.

Opponents say that the burden of this regressive sales tax increase would fall most heavily on the poor, working class families, and seniors. They spend a much higher percent of their income on sales taxes. The trucking industry, which causes great wear and tear on Missouri's roads would be exempt. It is estimated that the revenue lost from this exemption is approximately half a billion dollars over the ten year period.

### ***The League of Women Voters of Missouri opposes Proposition 7.***

#### **Proposition 8 - Veterans Lottery Ticket Amendment**

Veterans issues have been put to Missouri voters in the past. Most recently, a 2010 legislatively-referred constitutional amendment passed which provided a property tax exemption for disabled prisoners of war. Lottery funds exclusively for veterans have never been considered by Missouri voters until now. Voters must decide whether a "Veterans Lottery Ticket" can be created and the funds raised from the sale of those tickets can be used for projects and services related to veterans by voting on the following ballot measure:

*"Shall the Missouri Constitution be amended to create a 'Veterans Lottery Ticket' and to use the revenue from the sale of these tickets for projects and services related to veterans?"*

*The annual cost or savings to state and local governmental entities is unknown, but likely minimal. If sales of a veterans lottery ticket game decrease existing lottery ticket sales, the profits of which fund education, there could be a small annual shift in funding from education to veterans' programs.”*

If passed, the Missouri Constitution would be amended to create a "Veterans Lottery Ticket." The revenue raised from the sale of tickets will be used for Missouri veterans' services and projects. There will be no impact on taxes.

Proponents say that the lottery would help fund the state's seven veterans home, which have 1,800 on the waiting list. They point out that Kansas, Iowa, and Illinois have veterans' lotteries and have raised millions annually.

Opponents say that they are concerned that this new lottery will take away ticket sales from the Education Lottery. They also say that special lotteries allow the state legislature to lower appropriations.

***The League of Women Voters of Missouri takes no position on Proposition 8.***

### **Proposition 9 - Missouri Electronic Data Protection Amendment**

Since the high-profile disclosure of classified National Security Agency (NSA) by Edward Snowden, Americans have been concerned about electronic privacy. Snowden's disclosure revealed the existence of global surveillance programs and prompted criticism for violating rights to privacy of U.S. citizens and the international community. Missouri is not the only state government to act on privacy concerns in 2014. At least 20 states were involved in legislative action concerning electronic privacy. Voters are being asked to decide whether Missouri should enact further protections by voting on the following measure:

*“Shall Missouri law be amended so that the people shall be secure in their electronic communications and data from unreasonable searches and seizures as they are now likewise secure in their persons, homes, papers and effects?”*

*State and local government governmental entities expect no significant costs or savings. If passed, this measure will have no impact on taxes.”*

Proponents say that the amendment is a logical extension of existing protections from unwarranted searches and seizures. They are concerned that electronic data should be protected as well. They oppose increasing tracking of cell phones and other private electronic data unless there is evidence of criminal activity.

Opponents say that this amendment might have unintended consequences and might make it more difficult for law enforcement to investigate cyber-crimes. They also say that state actions are limited without federal action on this issue.

***The League of Women Voters of Missouri takes no position on Proposition 9.***