



Published: 02.13.2006

Ariz. sees plethora of initiative attempts

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHOENIX — Seventeen proposed ballot initiatives covering a range of subjects have been filed with state officials in an effort to get voters to decide the issues in November.

The proposals include efforts to raise the minimum wage, conserve state land, forbid same-sex marriage, ban smoking in public places, decriminalize marijuana and change taxes, school finances and farming practices.

Some of the campaigns will fall short and not make the ballot. A few appear to have stalled before they ever got going. But political observers are impressed by the early activity.

"I've been in Arizona politics for a long time, but I have never seen this many initiatives on the street at one time," said Nathan Sproul, a political consultant for the Protect Marriage Arizona initiative, noting that seven to 10 of the initiatives are very active already.

To make the Nov. 7 ballot, initiative campaigns have to collect at least 122,612 valid signatures from voters by July 6. The initiatives that would amend the state constitution — there are two so far, the Protect Marriage and the state land initiatives — need 183,917 signatures.

It's a long road to collect those signatures, and that road is paved with pamphlets, rallies, telemarketing and other activities needed to get their messages out that require big money.

The Protect Marriage Arizona initiative has a goal of raising more than \$1 million. By the end of last year, it had raised slightly over \$120,000.

Meanwhile, the Together Arizona campaign, the group opposing the Protect Marriage initiative, had raised one-third more, nearly \$170,000 by the end of the year. (*See related story, Page B1.*)

All content copyright © 1999-2006 AzStarNet, Arizona Daily Star and its wire services and suppliers and may not be republished without permission. All rights reserved. Any copying, redistribution, or retransmission of any of the contents of this service without the expressed written consent of Arizona Daily Star or AzStarNet is prohibited.