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## At least 11 measures likely to be on ballot

### Transit taxes, trust lands, home-buyer rights on list

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CAPITOL MEDIA SERVICES

PHOENIX — Arizona voters will likely get to decide the fate of 11 ballot measures this year.

There's a wide variety of choices for voters to make, ranging from higher taxes for transit and preserving state trust lands to questions about affirmative action programs and the rights of buyers of new homes.

Petitions for nine initiatives were turned in by the deadline of 5 p.m. Thursday, apparently with sufficient signatures to qualify for the Nov. 4 ballot.

The Secretary of State's Office will send random samples to the 15 county recorders to check their validity. Ultimately, constitutional-change votes require 230,047 valid signatures after invalid signatures are tossed out; changes-in-state-law votes need 153,365.

The last two measures were filed just Thursday: requiring a majority of registered voters to approve any tax hike at the ballot box, and constitutionally barring race- or sex-based preferences in government programs.

Two measures did not require signatures but were instead put directly on the ballot by lawmakers. One would constitutionally define marriage as between one man and one woman. The other would pave the way for local elections to unify more than 70 elementary and high school districts into about 20 districts.

There could be a 12th measure, as well. A special commission will meet later this year to recommend that voters be asked to OK a pay raise for state legislators, who now get \$24,000 a year plus allowances.

The number of ballot measures this year is down from the record 19 placed before voters two years ago.

### Voters: Here are issues you'll be asked to decide

The measures headed to the November ballot for Arizona voters to decide are:

Constitutionally define marriage as between one man and one woman.

- Reason: Arizona law already says this, but this measure is designed to prevent courts or future Legislatures

### Initiative proposals that failed to make deadline

Among the petition drives that faltered and did not turn in signatures by Thursday's deadline were:

- Rolling back property taxes.
- Rolling back property assessments.
- Repealing laws allowing payday lenders to operate in Arizona.
- Changing system of choosing legislative and congressional districts.
- Imposing stricter version of employer sanctions law.
- Requiring written approval of union members to use dues for political purposes.
- Allowing illegal immigrants to be charged under state law as trespassers.

from declaring a right to wed for gays.

- Major backers: Center for Arizona Policy, Arizona Catholic Conference. No financial donations so far.
- Likely opposition: Gay rights groups and others who contend there is no need for a constitutional amendment.

Keep payday loan industry alive past 2010.

- Reason: The law authorizing short-term, high-cost loans expires that year. The industry contends its services are needed, and it is willing to make some changes in operation.

- Major backers: Arizona Community Financial Services, composed of payday lenders. Contributions so far total more than \$2.9 million.

- Likely opposition: Community groups, Service Employees International Union, United Food and Commercial Workers Union. Funding so far about \$95,000.

Ban tax on transfer of real estate.

- Reason: There is no such tax now, but backers fear future efforts to broaden the tax base will include a real estate transfer tax.
- Major backers: Arizona Association of Realtors. Donations so far \$1.4 million.
- Likely opposition: Unclear.

Require 10-year warranty on new homes.

- Reason: Current law has no warranty requirement. Also, this is an outgrowth of a dispute between a major financial backer and home-builders.
- Major backers: Sheet Metal Workers International Association. Total so far about \$360,000.
- Likely opposition: Home-builders.

Ease some provisions of employer sanctions law.

- Reason: Business groups contend the state law that took effect Jan. 1 is unfair and penalizes companies for innocent mistakes.
- Major backers: Wake Up Arizona, an organization of business owners.
- Likely opposition: Rep. Russell Pearce, architect of the state law, and others opposed to illegal immigration.

Impose 1-cent hike in state sales tax for 30 years, to 6.6 percent, to pay for \$42.6 billion in transit improvements.

- Reason: Supporters say the current source of funds — gas taxes, vehicle registration fees and federal dollars — won't be enough to meet needs of this growing state.
- Major backers: Construction companies, many of whom get contracts for road and light rail construction. About \$700,000 collected so far.
- Likely opposition: Goldwater Institute (tax hike not necessary), some legislators (too much for mass transit), Sierra Club (too little for mass transit).

- Prohibiting use of cell phones while driving unless motorist has hands-free device.

- Setting up a system of ranked voting for elections.

### **2008 General Election**

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Put 570,000 acres of state trust land off-limits to development, and allow communities to buy at appraised price instead of having to bid at auction.

- Reason: Current mandate to Land Department to get most money for trust lands requires sale or lease for development to highest bidder.
- Major backers: Nature Conservancy, former state Democratic Party Chairman Jim Pederson. About \$800,000 so far.
- Likely opposition: Arizona School Boards Association, which fears undermining of funds for schools.

Require majority of registered voters, not just of those going to polls, to approve future tax hikes.

- Reason: Concern that state budget crunch and demands for special programs will lead to ballot initiatives to increase taxes, as did this year's road tax measure.
- Major backers: MJKL Enterprises, which owns the Carl's Jr. franchises in Arizona; TCAG Management Services (auto dealer Jim Click's California corporation); beer and wine distributors. About \$650,000 raised.
- Likely opposition: Unclear. Possibly groups that might want to take tax measures to the ballot in the future for health care and other issues.

Constitutionally bar preference in public employment, contracts and education based on race, sex, other factors.

- Reason: Backers seek end to affirmative action and other programs that provide special consideration for minorities and women.
- Major backers: American Civil Rights Coalition, headed by Ward Connerly, who got first version approved in California in 1996. Total funding so far about \$850,000.
- Likely opposition: By All Means Necessary, a group formed in Michigan to unsuccessfully battle 2006 measure there; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Prohibit forced enrollment in health insurance programs.

- Reason: Concern that future health care reforms will include systems that preclude patients' choosing their own doctors or that will force them to purchase health insurance.
- Major backers: Medical benefit firms, doctors, Kenneth Levy (New Jersey investment manager).
- Likely opposition: Groups that want to push single-payer health plans.

Mandate local elections in more than 70 school districts to decide if they should consolidate into about 20.

- Reason: Proponents contend that larger districts have proportionately smaller administrative costs.
- Major backers: None identified yet, though some businesses that are major taxpayers are expected to support it.
- Likely opposition: Board members in several affected school districts already are saying it would reduce local control.

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