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Statewide Signature Success Puts Local Control on the November Ballot

Arkansas is One Step Closer to Putting Local Voters in Charge of Casino Gambling

Little Rock, AR, July 31, 2024 – Arkansas Secretary of State John Thurston today officially certified the Local Voter Control of Casino Gambling Amendment for the November general election ballot. 116,200 signatures were verified by the Secretary of State as valid, eclipsing the 90,704 signature requirement. The proposed constitutional amendment gives local county voters the final say on whether casinos could be built in their communities.

The petition drive to put this issue before voters far exceeded the state-wide reach of previous efforts for statewide constitutional amendment campaigns. Citizen initiative petitions require a minimum signature count from at least 50 of the state's 75 counties (an increase this year from the previous 15-county minimum). But this petition met this requirement in all 75 Arkansas counties.

"In record numbers, Arkansas voters have stated the obvious – casinos should not be forced into communities that do not want them," said Local Voters in Charge spokesman Hans Stiritz. "Our state's motto 'Regnat Populus' – 'The People Rule' – is a promise that that we can fulfill by supporting Local Voter Control of Casino Gambling in November."

The Local Voter Control of Casino Gambling Amendment simply puts local voters in charge of any future attempt to build a casino in any Arkansas community. It does not affect the three casinos that are currently operating and doesn't authorize any new licenses. In 2018 an amendment was approved that authorized four casino licenses in four specific counties. Voters in three of those four counties supported that amendment, but in Pope County, voters overwhelmingly rejected the amendment because they did not want a casino in their community. The Local Control Amendment fixes this problem by removing the Pope County authorization and requiring local voter approval – in Pope County or any other county – of any future casino.

Despite a late start and over $700,000 dollars spent by gambling interests to try to derail the petition drive, this petition proved popular with Arkansas voters. "It's shocking that gambling interests would want to barge into local communities uninvited," said Stiritz. "If their casinos are so good for local communities, why would they not want to give local voters the final say on the matter?"

For more information, visit www.LocalVotersInCharge.org .

Paid for by Local Voters In Charge