

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the Arkansas Constitution.

1 State of Arkansas
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025

SJR 13

4
5 By: Senator J. Dotson
6 By: Representative Lundstrum

7
8 **SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION**

9 AN AMENDMENT TO THE ARKANSAS CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW A
10 CANDIDATE FOR SUPREME COURT JUSTICE, COURT OF APPEALS
11 JUDGE, CIRCUIT JUDGE, OR DISTRICT JUDGE TO DECLARE
12 HIS OR HER PARTY AFFILIATION OR INDEPENDENT STATUS
13 WHEN RUNNING FOR JUDICIAL OFFICE AND HAVE THAT
14 AFFILIATION OR STATUS REFLECTED ON THE BALLOT TO
15 ENSURE TRANSPARENCY TO THE VOTERS OF ARKANSAS.

16
17
18 **Subtitle**

19 A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO ALLOW A
20 CANDIDATE FOR SUPREME COURT JUSTICE,
21 COURT OF APPEALS JUDGE, CIRCUIT JUDGE,
22 OR DISTRICT JUDGE TO DECLARE HIS OR HER
23 PARTY AFFILIATION OR INDEPENDENT STATUS
24 WHEN RUNNING FOR JUDICIAL OFFICE.

25
26 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
27 STATE OF ARKANSAS, AND BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, A MAJORITY OF ALL
28 MEMBERS ELECTED TO EACH HOUSE AGREEING THERETO:

29
30 THAT the following is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of
31 the State of Arkansas, and upon being submitted to the electors of the state
32 for approval or rejection at the next general election for Representatives
33 and Senators, if a majority of the electors voting thereon at the election
34 adopt the amendment, the amendment shall become a part of the Constitution of
35 the State of Arkansas, to wit:



1 SECTION 1. INTENT. The purpose of this amendment to the Arkansas
 2 Constitution is to ensure transparency to the voters of Arkansas by allowing
 3 a candidate for Supreme Court Justice, Court of Appeals Judge, Circuit Judge,
 4 or District Judge to declare his or her party affiliation or independent
 5 status when running for judicial office and having that affiliation or status
 6 reflected on the ballot.

7
 8 SECTION 2. Arkansas Constitution, Amendment 80, §§ 17 and 18, are
 9 amended to read as follows:

10 § 17. Election of ~~circuit and district judges~~ Circuit Judges and
 11 District Judges.

12 (A) Circuit Judges and District Judges shall be elected ~~on a~~
 13 ~~nonpartisan basis~~ by a majority of qualified electors voting for such office
 14 within the circuit or district which they serve.

15 (B) Vacancies in these offices shall be filled as provided by this
 16 Constitution.

17 (C) A candidate for Circuit Judge or District Judge may elect to:

18 (1) Have his or her political party affiliation identified on
 19 the ballot; or

20 (2) Be identified on the ballot as an independent candidate.

21
 22 § 18. Election of Supreme Court Justices and Court of Appeals Judges.

23 (A) Supreme Court Justices and Court of Appeals Judges shall be
 24 elected ~~on a nonpartisan basis~~ by a majority of qualified electors voting for
 25 such office. Provided, however, the General Assembly may refer the issue of
 26 merit selection of members of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals to a
 27 vote of the people at any general election. If the voters approve a merit
 28 selection system, the General Assembly shall enact laws to create a judicial
 29 nominating commission for the purpose of nominating candidates for merit
 30 selection to the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals.

31 (B) Vacancies in these offices shall be filled by appointment of the
 32 Governor, unless the voters provide otherwise in a system of merit selection.

33 (C) A candidate for Supreme Court Justice or Court of Appeals Judge
 34 may elect to:

35 (1) Have his or her political party affiliation identified on
 36 the ballot; or

1 (2) Be identified on the ballot as an independent candidate.

2
3 SECTION 3. EFFECTIVE DATE. This amendment is effective on and after
4 January 1, 2027.

5
6 SECTION 4. BALLOT TITLE AND POPULAR NAME. When this proposed
7 amendment is submitted to the electors of this state on the general election
8 ballot:

9 (1) The title of this Joint Resolution shall be the ballot
10 title; and

11 (2) The popular name shall be "A Constitutional Amendment to
12 Ensure Transparency in Judicial Elections to the Voters of Arkansas."