

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

1 State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: S4/2/25*
2 95th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2025
4
5 By: Senator J. Dotson
6 By: Representative Lundstrum
7

SJR 13

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.
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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:
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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:
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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.

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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 (D) The General Assembly may enact laws concerning the election of
22 circuit judges and district judges, including without limitation laws
23 concerning the procedure for:

24 (1) The election of circuit judges and district judges,
25 including without limitation the manner in which candidates shall appear on a
26 primary election ballot and the requirements for a candidate to advance from
27 the primary election to the general election;

28 (2) A candidate wishing to identify a political party
29 affiliation on the ballot to qualify as a candidate for circuit judge or
30 district judge; and

31 (3) An independent candidate to qualify as a candidate for
32 circuit judge and district judge.

33 (E) This section supersedes any other conflicting election-procedure
34 requirements for the election of circuit judges and district judges under
35 this Constitution.

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1 § 18. Election of Supreme Court Justices and Court of Appeals Judges.

2 (A) Supreme Court Justices and Court of Appeals Judges shall be
3 elected ~~on a nonpartisan basis~~ by a majority of qualified electors voting for
4 such office. Provided, however, the General Assembly may refer the issue of
5 merit selection of members of the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals to a
6 vote of the people at any general election. If the voters approve a merit
7 selection system, the General Assembly shall enact laws to create a judicial
8 nominating commission for the purpose of nominating candidates for merit
9 selection to the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals.

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

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

14 (1) Have his or her political party affiliation identified on
15 the ballot; or

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

17 (D) The General Assembly may enact laws concerning the election of
18 Supreme Court Justices and Court of Appeals Judges, including without
19 limitation laws concerning the procedure for:

20 (1) The election of Supreme Court Justices and Court of Appeals
21 Judges, including without limitation the manner in which candidates shall
22 appear on a primary election ballot and the requirements for a candidate to
23 advance from the primary election to the general election;

24 (2) A candidate wishing to identify a political party
25 affiliation on the ballot to qualify as a candidate for Supreme Court Justice
26 or Court of Appeals Judge; and

27 (3) An independent candidate to qualify as a candidate for
28 Supreme Court Justice or Court of Appeals Judge.

29 (E) This section supersedes any other conflicting election-procedure
30 requirements for the election of Supreme Court Justices and Court of Appeals
31 Judges under this Constitution.

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

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36 SECTION 4. BALLOT TITLE AND POPULAR NAME. When this proposed

1 amendment is submitted to the electors of this state on the general election
2 ballot:

3 (1) The title of this Joint Resolution shall be the ballot
4 title; and

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

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/s/J. Dotson

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