

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 15

4
5 By: Senator J. Dismang
6 By: Representative Beaty Jr.
7

8 **SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION**

9 AN AMENDMENT TO THE ARKANSAS CONSTITUTION CONCERNING
10 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE STATE OF ARKANSAS; AND
11 AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO PROVIDE FOR THE
12 CREATION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS WITHIN
13 CITIES, COUNTIES, OR COOPERATIVE AREAS TO PROMOTE
14 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
15 DISTRICT.
16

17
18 **Subtitle**

19 A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT CONCERNING
20 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE STATE OF
21 ARKANSAS; AND AUTHORIZING THE GENERAL
22 ASSEMBLY TO PROVIDE FOR THE CREATION OF
23 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS TO
24 PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.
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:
36



1 SECTION 1. Loans and grants of public money. (a) Notwithstanding any
 2 other provision of the Arkansas Constitution, the General Assembly may
 3 provide for the creation of programs and the making of loans and grants of
 4 public money for the public purposes of:

5 (1) Development and diversification of the economy of the State
 6 of Arkansas;

7 (2) The elimination and prevention of unemployment or
 8 underemployment in the State of Arkansas;

9 (3) The development or expansion of transportation or commerce
 10 in the State of Arkansas; or

11 (4) The development or improvement of real estate in the State
 12 of Arkansas that contributes to economic development within the State of
 13 Arkansas.

14 (b) The authority under subsection (a) of this section includes
 15 without limitation providing for the creation of economic development
 16 districts.

17
 18 SECTION 2. Economic development district projects.

19 (a) An economic development district may issue bonds for the purpose
 20 of financing projects within the economic development district.

21 (b) The bonds under subsection (a) of this section:

22 (1) May be secured by and be payable from all or a portion of
 23 any funds received by or allocated to the economic development district;

24 (2) Shall not be considered in calculating debt limits for bonds
 25 issued under Arkansas Constitution, Article 12, § 4; and

26 (3) Shall not be subject to the provisions of:

27 (A) Arkansas Constitution, Article 16, § 1;

28 (B) Arkansas Constitution, Amendment 62; or

29 (C) Arkansas Constitution, Amendment 65.

30
 31 SECTION 3. Implementation. The General Assembly shall provide by law
 32 for the implementation of this amendment.

33
 34 SECTION 4. Arkansas Constitution, Article 2, § 23, is amended to read
 35 as follows:

36 § 23. Eminent domain and taxation.

1 The State’s ancient right of eminent domain and of taxation, is herein
 2 fully and expressly conceded; and the General Assembly may delegate the
 3 taxing power, with the necessary restriction, to the State’s subordinate
 4 political and municipal corporations, to the extent of providing for their
 5 existence, economic development, maintenance, and well being, but no further.

6
 7 SECTION 5. Arkansas Constitution, Article 12, § 5, is amended to read
 8 as follows:

9 § 5. Political subdivisions not to become stockholders in or lend
 10 credit to private corporations – Exceptions.

11 (a) No county, city, town or other municipal corporation, shall become
 12 a stockholder in any company, association, or corporation; or obtain or
 13 appropriate money for, or loan its credit to, any corporation, association,
 14 institution, or individual.

15 (b) However, a county, city, town, or other municipal corporation may
 16 obtain or appropriate money for a corporation, association, institution, or
 17 individual to:

18 (1) Finance economic development projects; ~~or~~

19 (2) Provide economic development services; or

20 (3) Provide funding or lend credit to an economic development
 21 district.

22 (c) As used in this section:

23 (1) "Economic development district" means a designated area
 24 within a city, county, or cooperative area established under authority
 25 granted by the General Assembly to promote economic development within the
 26 designated area;

27 ~~(1)~~(2) “Economic development projects” means the land,
 28 buildings, furnishings, equipment, facilities, infrastructure, and
 29 improvements that are required or suitable for the development, retention, or
 30 expansion of:

31 (A) Manufacturing, production, and industrial facilities;

32 (B) Research, technology, and development facilities;

33 (C) Recycling facilities;

34 (D) Distribution centers;

35 (E) Call centers;

36 (F) Warehouse facilities;

- 1 (G) Job training facilities;
- 2 (H) Regional or national corporate headquarters
- 3 facilities; ~~and~~
- 4 (I) Sports complexes designed to host local, state,
- 5 regional, and national competitions, including without limitation baseball,
- 6 softball, and other sports tournaments; and
- 7 (J) An economic development district as authorized by the
- 8 General Assembly and designated as part of an economic development plan;

9 ~~(2)~~(3) “Economic development services” means:

- 10 (A) Planning, marketing, and strategic advice and counsel
- 11 regarding job recruitment, job development, job retention, and job expansion;
- 12 (B) Supervision and operation of industrial parks or other
- 13 such properties; and
- 14 (C) Negotiation of contracts for the sale or lease of
- 15 industrial parks or other such properties; and

16 ~~(3)~~(4) “Infrastructure” means:

- 17 (A) Land acquisition;
- 18 (B) Site preparation;
- 19 (C) Road and highway improvements;
- 20 (D) Rail spur, railroad, and railport construction;
- 21 (E) Water service;
- 22 (F) Wastewater treatment;
- 23 (G) Employee training which may include equipment for such
- 24 purpose; ~~and~~
- 25 (H) Environmental mitigation or reclamation; and
- 26 (I) Utilities, including without limitation power
- 27 generation, transmission, and distribution.

28 (d) The General Assembly, by a three-fourths vote of each house,

29 may amend the provisions of subsections (b) and (c) of this section so long

30 as the amendments are germane to this section and consistent with its policy

31 and purposes.

32

33 SECTION 6. Arkansas Constitution, Article 16, § 5, is amended to read

34 as follows:

35 § 5. Property taxed according to value – Procedures for valuation –

36 Tax exemptions.

1 (a) All real and tangible personal property subject to taxation shall
 2 be taxed according to its value, that value to be ascertained in such manner
 3 as the General Assembly shall direct, making the same equal and uniform
 4 throughout the State. No one species of property for which a tax may be
 5 collected shall be taxed higher than another species of property of equal
 6 value, except as provided and authorized in Section 15 of this Article, and
 7 except as authorized in Section 14 of this Article. The General Assembly,
 8 upon the approval thereof by a vote of not less than three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$ ths) of
 9 the members elected to each house, may establish the methods and procedures
 10 for valuation of property for taxation purposes, but may not alter the method
 11 of valuation set forth in Section 15 of this Article.

12 (b)(1) The following property shall be exempt from taxation: public
 13 property used exclusively for public purposes; churches used as such;
 14 cemeteries used exclusively as such; school buildings and apparatus;
 15 libraries and grounds used exclusively for school purposes; and buildings and
 16 grounds and materials used exclusively for public charity.

17 (2) If property exempt from taxation under subdivision (b)(1) of
 18 this section is included in an economic development district, the tax status
 19 of the property shall not change.

20 (c) Property located within an economic development district created
 21 by the General Assembly shall be exempt from taxation except for taxes,
 22 assessments, or other charges levied by the economic development district of
 23 which the property is a part.

24 (d) Nothing in this Section shall affect or repeal the provision of
 25 Amendment 57 to the Constitution of the State of Arkansas pertaining to
 26 intangible personal property.

27
 28 SECTION 7. Arkansas Constitution, Amendment 62, § 6, is amended to
 29 read as follows:

30 § 6. Conduct of elections.

31 (a) The General Assembly may enact laws governing the conduct of
 32 elections authorized by this Amendment. Absent the enactment of such laws,
 33 such elections shall be held, called and conducted in accordance with the
 34 laws governing elections generally. The results of such election shall be
 35 published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county or municipality
 36 (as the case may be) and any contest of such election or the tabulation of

1 the votes therein shall be brought within thirty (30) days after such
2 publication or shall be forever barred.

3 (b)(1) Any bonds or other obligations of a county, municipality, or
4 other political subdivision facilitating the development and diversification
5 of the economy of the state that are issued for the purpose of making loans
6 or grants in connection with a program authorized by the General Assembly
7 under this amendment and that are payable from ad valorem taxes shall be
8 approved by a vote of the majority of the qualified electors of the county,
9 municipality, or political subdivision voting on the issue.

10 (2) A program created or a loan or grant made by an economic
11 development district that is secured by a pledge of ad valorem taxes or
12 financed by the issuance of any bonds or other obligations payable from ad
13 valorem taxes of the economic development district does not constitute or
14 create a debt for the purpose of any provision of this Constitution.

15
16 SECTION 8. Repealer – Construction.

17 (a) Any provision of this Constitution, including without limitation
18 amendments to this Constitution, that conflicts with or is in any way
19 inconsistent with this amendment is repealed or deemed modified to give
20 precedence to this amendment.

21 (b) This amendment supersedes all previous constitutional provisions,
22 amendments, laws, or judicial interpretations that conflict with this
23 amendment's terms.

24 (c) If this amendment conflicts with any existing constitutional
25 provision, amendment, law, or judicial interpretation, this amendment shall
26 prevail and be given full force and effect.

27
28 SECTION 9. Severability. The provisions of this amendment are
29 severable, and if any provision of this amendment should be held invalid, the
30 remainder shall stand.

31
32 SECTION 10. Effective date. This amendment to the Arkansas
33 Constitution shall be effective on and after January 1, 2027.

34
35 SECTION 11. BALLOT TITLE AND POPULAR NAME. When this proposed
36 amendment is submitted to the electors of this state on the general election

1 ballot:

2 (1) The title of this joint resolution shall be the ballot
3 title; and

4 (2) The popular name shall be "A Constitutional Amendment
5 Concerning Economic Development in the State of Arkansas; and Authorizing the
6 General Assembly to Provide for the Creation of Economic Development
7 Districts Within Cities, Counties, or Cooperative Areas to Promote Economic
8 Development Within the Economic Development District."

9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36