

1 State of Arkansas  
2 92nd General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2019  
4

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1517

5 By: Representative Cloud  
6 By: Senator B. Davis  
7

## For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR AN ELECTION CONCERNING CASINO  
10 GAMING IN POPE COUNTY; TO AMEND ARKANSAS  
11 CONSTITUTION, AMENDMENT 100, PURSUANT TO THE  
12 AUTHORITY GRANTED BY ARKANSAS CONSTITUTION, ARTICLE  
13 5, § 1; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER  
14 PURPOSES.  
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## Subtitle

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18 TO PROVIDE FOR AN ELECTION CONCERNING  
19 CASINO GAMING IN POPE COUNTY; AMENDING  
20 ARKANSAS CONSTITUTION, AMENDMENT 100; AND  
21 TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.  
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24 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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26 SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. LEGISLATIVE INTENT. (a) The General  
27 Assembly finds:

28 (1) Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 1, provides that "[n]o  
29 measure approved by a vote of the people shall be amended or repealed by the  
30 General Assembly. . . except upon a yea and nay vote on roll call of two-  
31 thirds of all the members elected to each house of the General Assembly. .  
32 .";

33 (2) Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 1, defines a "measure"  
34 to include any bill, law, resolution, ordinance, charter, constitutional  
35 amendment or legislative proposal or enactment of any character;

36 (3) The plain language of the definition of "measure" in



1 Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 1 clearly includes amendments to the  
 2 Arkansas Constitution, meaning that the General Assembly may amend such  
 3 measures with a two-thirds vote of each house;

4 (4) Despite observing that the definition of "measure" in  
 5 Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 1 included "constitutional amendment(s)  
 6 'or legislative proposals of any character'", the Supreme Court in Arkansas  
 7 Game and Fish Commission v. Edgmon, 218 Ark. 207, 235 S.W.2d 554 (1951),  
 8 declined to construe the language literally and held that the General  
 9 Assembly lacked the power to amend or repeal amendments to the Arkansas  
 10 Constitution by a two-thirds vote of each house;

11 (5) In Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas v.  
 12 Andrews, 2018 Ark. 12 (2018), the Supreme Court overturned years of precedent  
 13 by holding that the General Assembly cannot waive by law the state's  
 14 sovereign immunity granted by Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 20;

15 (6) In reaching its decision in Andrews, supra, the Supreme  
 16 Court held that the language of Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 20,  
 17 should be interpreted "precisely as it reads"; and

18 (7) An interpretation of Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 1,  
 19 "precisely as it reads" clearly leads to the conclusion that the General  
 20 Assembly may amend all measures, including constitutional amendments, by a  
 21 two-thirds vote of each house.

22 (b) By the passage of this act, the General Assembly expresses its  
 23 belief that, upon consideration of this act using the standard of review  
 24 established in Andrews, supra, the Supreme Court will:

25 (1) Interpret Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 1, precisely  
 26 as it reads;

27 (2) Overturn its decision in Edgmon, supra, as inconsistent with  
 28 its holding in Andrews, supra; and

29 (3) Uphold the constitutional authority of the General Assembly  
 30 under Arkansas Constitution, Article 5, § 1, to amend or repeal amendments to  
 31 the Arkansas Constitution by a two-thirds vote of each house.

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 33 SECTION 2. Arkansas Constitution, Amendment 100, § 4(n)-(r) are  
 34 amended to read as follows:

35 (n)(1) The Arkansas Racing Commission shall require all casino  
 36 applicants for a casino license in ~~Pope County~~ and Jefferson County to submit

1 either a letter of support from the county judge or a resolution from the  
2 quorum court in the county where the proposed casino is to be located and, if  
3 the proposed casino is to be located within a city or town, shall also  
4 require all casino applicants to include a letter of support from the mayor  
5 in the city or town where the applicant is proposing the casino to be  
6 located.

7 (2) Letters of support under subdivision (n)(1) of this section  
8 shall be from the county judge, quorum court, and mayor in office at the time  
9 of the submission of the application.

10 (o)(1) The Arkansas Racing Commission shall not issue a casino license  
11 in Pope County unless the voters of the county approve conducting casino  
12 gaming in Pope County.

13 (2)(A) An election shall be called on the issue of conducting  
14 casino gaming in Pope County upon the submission to the county clerk of  
15 signatures equaling at least ten percent (10%) of the qualified electors who  
16 cast a vote in the county for the Office of Governor in the last general  
17 election in which the office appeared on the ballot.

18 (B) A petition under this subdivision (o)(2) shall be  
19 submitted to the county clerk at least four (4) months prior to a general  
20 election.

21 (C) If a petition is found by the county clerk to be  
22 insufficient, the sponsor of the petition shall be permitted at least thirty  
23 (30) days from the date of notification for correction or amendment.

24 (3)(A) If a petition is found to be sufficient, the issue of  
25 conducting casino gaming in Pope County shall be considered by the qualified  
26 electors of the county at the next following general election.

27 (B) If the legal voters approve conducting casino gaming  
28 in Pope County, the Arkansas Racing Commission shall accept applications for  
29 a casino license in Pope County.

30 (C) If the legal voters reject conducting casino gaming in  
31 Pope County, the Arkansas Racing Commission shall not accept applications for  
32 a casino license in Pope County.

33 (4)(A) If conducting casino gaming is approved in Pope County,  
34 the Arkansas Racing Commission shall require all casino applicants for a  
35 casino license in Pope County to submit either a letter of support from the  
36 county judge or a resolution from the quorum court in the county where the

1 proposed casino is to be located and, if the proposed casino is to be located  
2 within a city or town, shall also require all casino applicants to include a  
3 letter of support from the mayor in the city or town where the applicant is  
4 proposing the casino to be located.

5 (B) Letters of support under subdivision (o)(4)(A) of this  
6 section shall be from the county judge, quorum court, and mayor in office at  
7 the time of the submission of the application.

8 (5) If an election is held under this subsection (o), a  
9 subsequent election to consider the issue of conducting casino gaming in Pope  
10 County shall not be held within ten (10) years of the date of the general  
11 election at which the issue was considered.

12 (6) The General Assembly may enact laws necessary to implement  
13 this subsection (o), including without limitations laws concerning the  
14 requirements and procedures for an election on the issue of conducting casino  
15 gaming in Pope County under this subsection (o).

16 ~~(p)~~ Franchise holders are not applicants and are not required to  
17 submit applications for casino licenses in order to be issued a casino  
18 license.

19 ~~(q)~~ No individual, corporation, partnership, association, trust, or  
20 other entity may hold more than one casino license in Arkansas.

21 ~~(r)~~ The Arkansas Racing Commission shall issue a renewal casino  
22 license within ten (10) days to any licensed casino that complies with the  
23 requirements contained in this Amendment, including without limitation the  
24 payment of the casino license renewal fee, which shall not exceed ten  
25 thousand dollars (\$10,000). Casino licenses shall be renewed every ten years.

26 ~~(s)(1)~~ The Arkansas Racing Commission shall provide an annual  
27 amount of at least two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) for compulsive  
28 gambling disorder treatment and compulsive gambling disorder educational  
29 programs.

30 (2) The Arkansas Racing Commission shall work together with the  
31 Department of Human Services to implement the compulsive gambling disorder  
32 treatment programs and the compulsive gambling disorder educational programs  
33 under this section.

34 (3) The Arkansas Racing Commission may contract with the  
35 Department of Human Services for providing all services related to and  
36 administration of the compulsive gambling disorder treatment programs and the

1 compulsive gambling disorder educational programs.

2 (4) The Department of Human Services may promulgate rules to  
3 administer the compulsive gambling disorder treatment programs and the  
4 compulsive gambling disorder educational programs.

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6 SECTION 3. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the  
7 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the statewide adoption of  
8 Arkansas Constitution, Amendment 100, has authorized casino gaming in Pope  
9 County despite the voters in that county rejecting the measure; in weighing  
10 Pope County's rejection of Amendment 100 against the approval of Amendment  
11 100 on a statewide basis, it is equitable to allow the residents of Pope  
12 County to vote on the issue before the Arkansas Racing Commission accepts  
13 applications for a casino license in Pope County; and this act should become  
14 effective at the earliest opportunity to prevent the submission of casino  
15 applications prior to the results of an election in Pope County. Therefore,  
16 an emergency is declared to exist, and this act being immediately necessary  
17 for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become  
18 effective on:

19 (1) The date of its approval by the Governor;

20 (2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor,  
21 the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the  
22 bill; or

23 (3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is  
24 overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

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