

Issue 1: Expanding Access to Lottery-Funded Scholarships for Vocational and Technical Schools

Overview

Issue 1 is a proposed amendment to the Arkansas Constitution that will appear on the November 5th, 2024, general election ballot. The amendment aims to expand the use of Arkansas Scholarship Lottery proceeds to provide scholarships and grants for students enrolled in vocational-technical schools and technical institutes, in addition to those attending traditional two- and four-year colleges.

Legislative Background

The Arkansas General Assembly referred Issue 1 to voters during its 2023 regular session with broad support. The measure passed the House of Representatives by a 97-0 vote and the Senate by a 30-0 vote. The amendment reflects a growing recognition of the importance of vocational education in meeting Arkansas' workforce needs.

Key Features of Issue 1

- **Current Status:** Under Amendment 87, lottery-funded scholarships are limited to students attending two-year and four-year colleges and universities in Arkansas.
- **Proposed Change:** Issue 1 would allow lottery proceeds to be used for scholarships and grants for students enrolled in public or private nonprofit vocational-technical schools and technical institutes.
- **Effective Date:** If approved, the amendment would take effect in January 2025.

Why Vote for Issue 1?

Expanding scholarships to include vocational and technical schools will:

- Help close the workforce skills gap in Arkansas by offering financial assistance to students pursuing careers in high-demand fields such as HVAC, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and more.
- Increase opportunities for students who do not wish to pursue traditional college degrees but still aim to enter lucrative and essential careers.
- Align scholarship funding with the state's economic priorities by targeting students training for Arkansas' 20 most in-demand careers.

What a Vote Means

- **A Vote "FOR" Issue 1:** Supports amending the Arkansas Constitution to expand lottery-funded scholarships to vocational-technical schools and technical institutes.
- **A Vote "AGAINST" Issue 1:** Opposes the constitutional change, keeping lottery funds limited to scholarships for students attending two-year and four-year colleges.