

Attorney general reject's casino amendment wording

Written by Administrator
Monday, 12 March 2018 19:11 -

Attorney General Leslie Rutledge has rejected the wording of a proposed **constitutional amendment to expand casino gambling** in Arkansas.

The proposal would solidify the legality of existing racetrack casinos at **Southland Park in West Memphis** and **Oaklawn Park in Hot Springs**, both currently operating euphemistic electronic games of skill allowed only at outlets with pari-mutuel wagering. Tax revenue would go to highway and road construction, thus the name for the committee, **Driving Arkansas Forward**.

It would also allow casinos in Jefferson and Pope counties, with Jefferson County being the primary target for a casino likely to be backed by the **Quapaw and Cherokee tribes**, both operators of Oklahoma casinos. The money behind the effort is not yet revealed, but it is believed to include Southland, with a booming casino but withering greyhound racing, along with the Indian tribes. Oaklawn's position is not yet known. It has formed a committee to "monitor" casino developments but hasn't yet put money in that effort. There's some school of thought that the expanded powers for Oaklawn — along with constitutional support from gambling revenues of continued support of thoroughbred racing purses — might it keep it neutral on the measure.

If it makes the ballot. That will require a petition campaign. But first, it must have clearance from the attorney general.

[Her opinion said elements](#) of the ballot title were misleading and there were "ambiguities" in the text.

Among other things, she said the popular name was too long. She also notes the amendment legalizes sports and "other events" but isn't specific about what those events might be. She said it is also unclear if Oaklawn and Southland could operate more than one casino in their respective counties.

Rutledge rejected the first try at this amendment, but then [it was changed to be more advantageous to Southland and Oaklawn](#).

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The amendment was submitted by the law firm of Steel, Wright, Gray and Hutchinson, whose members include Sen. Jeremy Hutchinson and former Rep. Nate Steel. It is expected to be resubmitted.

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