



December 6 Update

# Snapshot

The Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana

## PAR Snapshot

### *Recapping the Constitutional Amendments*

#### ***Three More Amendments Added to State Constitution***

Since voters ratified the Louisiana Constitution in 1974, they have been asked to decide 305 amendments, a number growing to 308 with the proposals in the December election. So far, 206 changes have won approval.

PAR has compiled [data](#) on proposed and approved constitutional amendments since the first round presented to voters in 1978 and analyzed whether any patterns or trends existed. The fluctuating line of support shows there are no significant trends in voters' overall support for amendments over the last five decades.

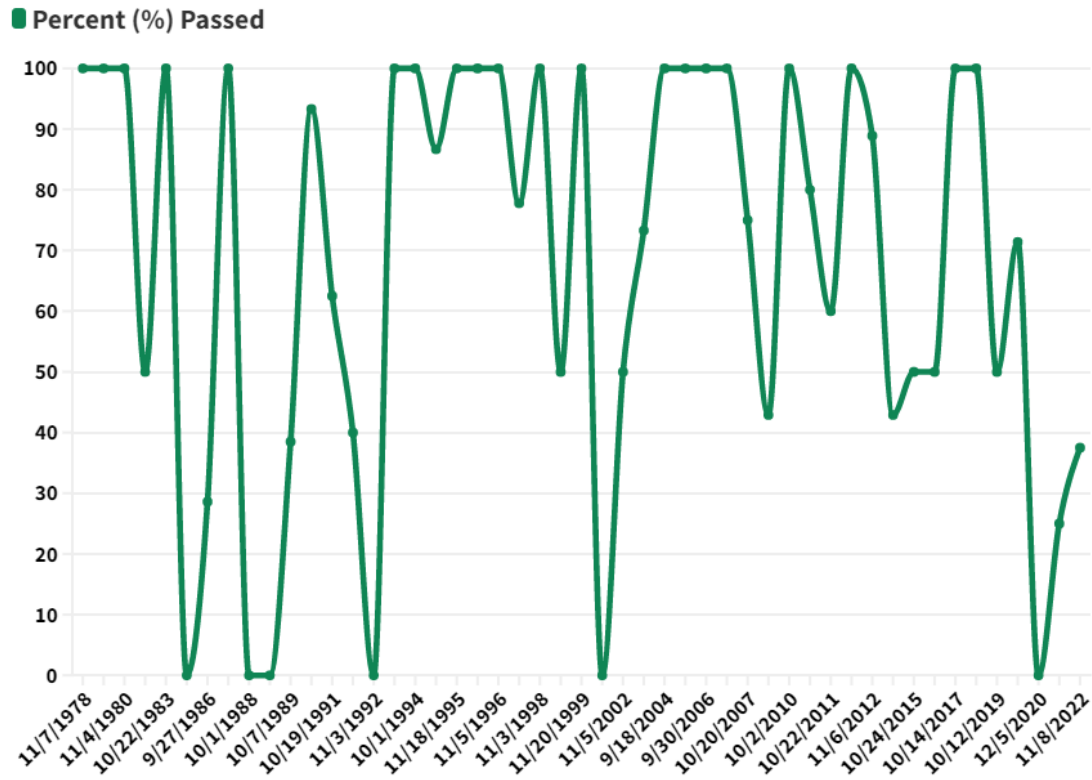
However, one tendency is discernible.

Fewer voters participate in deciding the outcome of constitutional amendments than top races on the ballot. Even among those who vote on the amendments, participation generally declines from the first proposed change to the last one on the list.

In other words, fewer people tend to vote on the amendments than on the candidates vying for a statewide office, and fewer people traditionally vote on the final amendment in the list than on the first one.

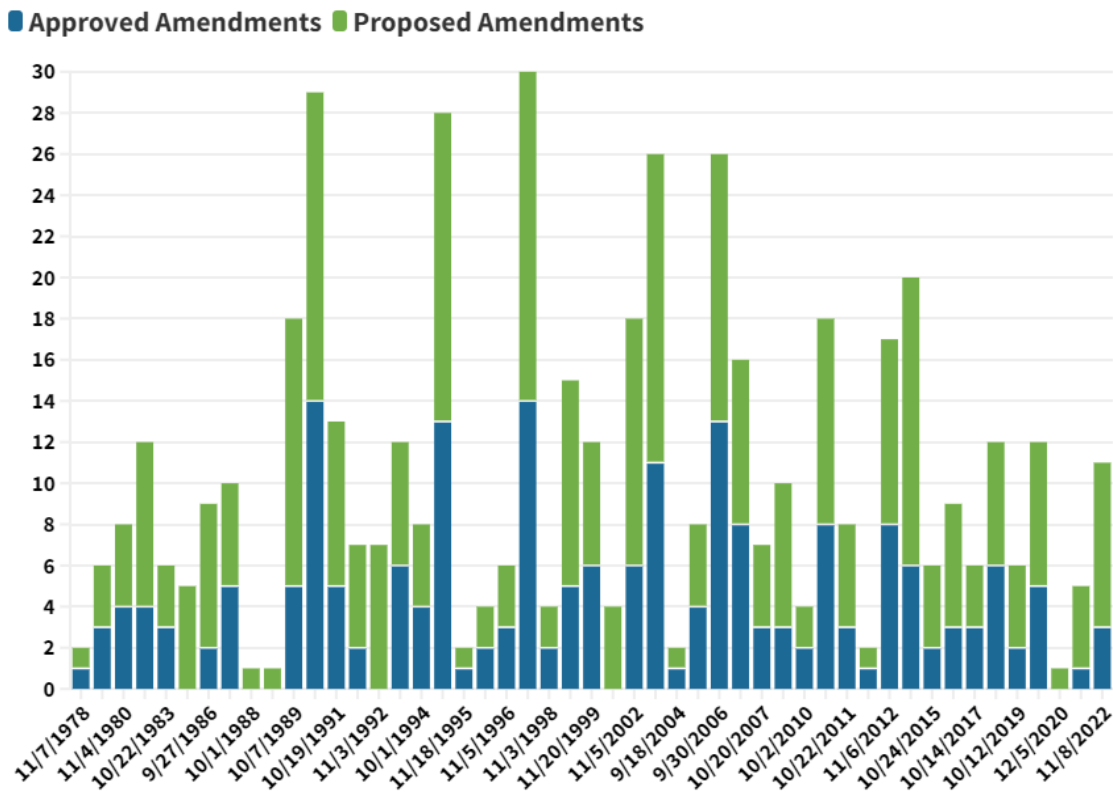
Since 2012, when Louisiana had major statewide races at the top of the ballot, at least 2% and sometimes more than 6% fewer people voted on the first constitutional amendment compared to those voting for president, senator or governor.

## Percentage of Amendments Passed 1978-2022



Source: PAR, Louisiana Secretary of State's Office

## Proposed and Approved Amendments 1978-2022



Source: PAR, Louisiana Secretary of State's Office

In the Nov. 8 election, Louisiana's voters decided the fate of eight constitutional amendments. They rejected five of the proposals and backed only three of those placed on the ballot by lawmakers.

The amendments passed by voters will:

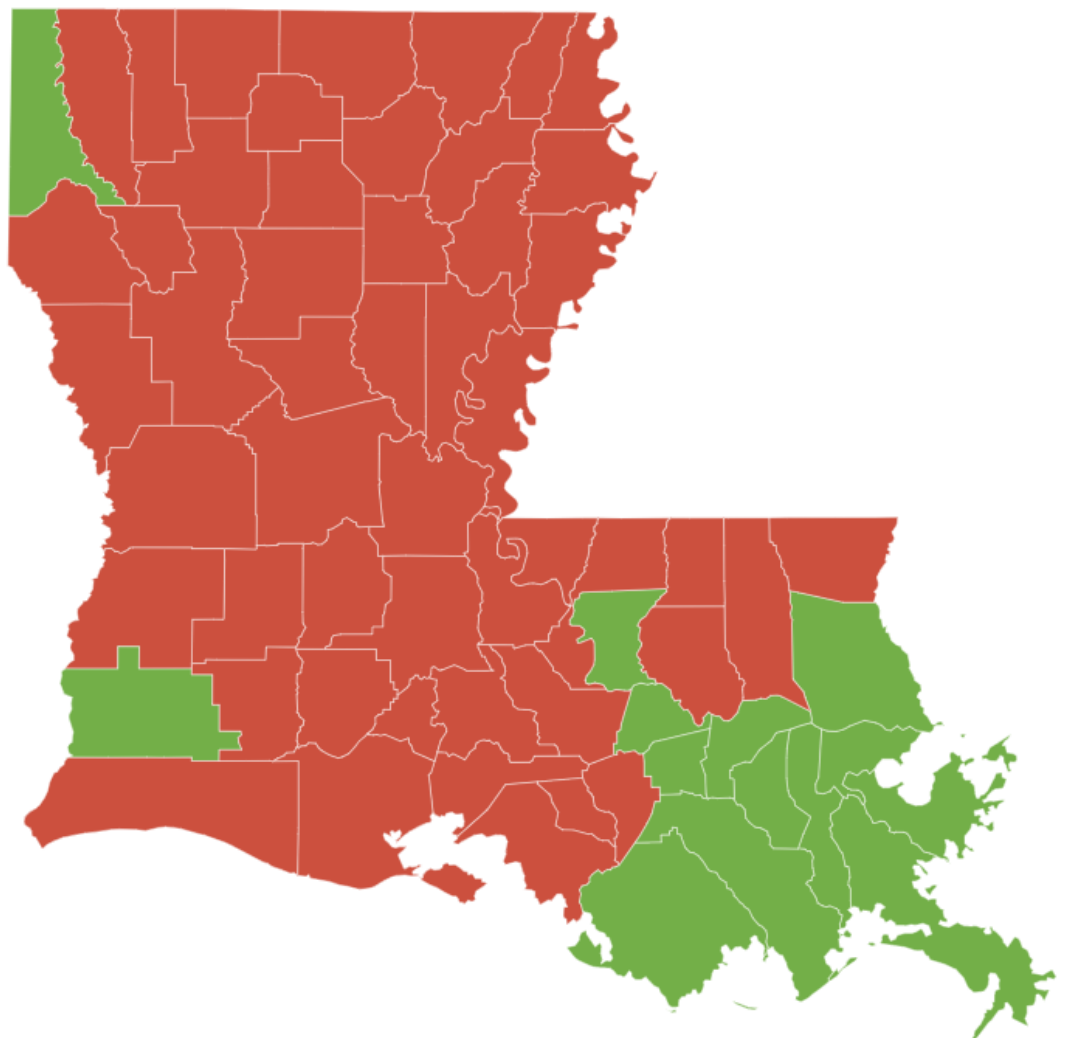
- Increase the property tax exemption for disabled veterans with a 100% service-connected disability or unemployability rating and expand the homestead exemption to cover more disabled veterans, on a sliding scale based on the level of disability. The tax break also will extend to their surviving spouses after the veteran's death.
- Let local water districts, municipalities or other political subdivisions reduce customer bills for water use if the charges stem from water lost due to damage outside a customer's control.
- Remove the requirement that property owners who are permanently and totally disabled and their spouses annually certify that they meet certain income benchmarks to receive a property tax rate freeze. Instead, they'll certify their income level only once to qualify for the freeze.

The spurned amendments that will not take effect would have:

- Let the state increase to 65% the maximum amount of money in seven different trust funds that can be invested in equities on the stock market.
- Allowed 51,000 state and local civil service workers to attend campaign events and appear in campaign advertisements and photographs for a candidate for public office if that candidate is an immediate family member.
- Given local taxing bodies more time to decide if they want to "roll forward" millages that increase property taxes paid by businesses and homeowners.
- Limited increases in the property tax liability of homes subject to homestead exemption in Orleans Parish by capping the reassessment increase to 10% of the residential property's assessed value in the previous year.
- Rewritten Louisiana's constitutional ban on slavery and involuntary servitude, allowing their use only for the "lawful administration of criminal justice." Instead, voters kept current language banning slavery and involuntary servitude, but allowing involuntary servitude as a "punishment for crime." The sponsor of the amendment asked voters to oppose it because of conflicting interpretations about the language's impact.

### **Support and Opposition to Amendment 6 by Parish**

■ opposed ■ supported



**Source:** Louisiana Secretary of State's Office

The sixth amendment on November's ballot, which would have limited increases in the property tax liability of homes subject to the homestead exemption in Orleans Parish, failed by a razor-thin margin, losing by only 6,971 votes out of nearly 1.3 million cast. While support for the amendment was concentrated in the southeastern region of the state, parishes with major cities such as Lake Charles and Shreveport also were strongholds for passage. The three parishes with the highest support for the amendment were Orleans, Jefferson and St. Tammany. Heavy opposition to the amendment came from the northeastern region. LaSalle, Catahoula and Franklin parishes had the lowest rate of support for the amendment.

Voters statewide face more homework for the Dec. 10 ballot, with three additional amendments up for consideration. Those proposals would ban people who aren't United States citizens from registering to vote or casting ballots in Louisiana elections and require state Senate confirmation of the governor's appointees to the State Civil Service Commission and the State Police Commission. To learn more about the three proposals, check out [PAR's Guide to the 2022 Constitutional Amendments](#).

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