

State Public Questions 2020

State Public Question 1

Constitutional Amendment to Legalize Marijuana

Do you approve amending the Constitution to legalize a controlled form of marijuana called “cannabis”?

Only adults at least 21 years of age could use cannabis. The State commission created to oversee the State’s medical cannabis program would also oversee the new, personal use cannabis market.

Cannabis products would be subject to the State sales tax. If authorized by the Legislature, a municipality may pass a local ordinance to charge a local tax on cannabis products.

Interpretive Statement

This amendment would legalize a controlled form of marijuana called “cannabis”. Only persons at least 21 years of age could use cannabis products legally.

The Cannabis Regulatory Commission would oversee the new adult cannabis market. This commission was created in 2019 to oversee the State’s medical cannabis program. The scope of the commission’s new authority would be detailed in laws enacted by the Legislature.

All retail sales of cannabis products in the new adult cannabis market would be subject to the State’s sales tax. If authorized by the Legislature, a municipality may pass a local ordinance to charge a local tax on cannabis products.

State Public Question 2

Property Tax Deduction and Exemption for Peacetime Veterans

Do you approve amending the Constitution to give a \$250 property tax deduction to veterans who did not serve in time of war? Do you also approve amending the Constitution to give a 100 percent property tax exemption to certain totally disabled veterans who did not serve in time of war?

The widow or widower of these veterans also would receive this \$250 deduction or 100 percent exemption after the veteran's death.

Interpretive Statement

This amendment would give a \$250 property tax deduction to veterans who did not serve in time of war. The widow or widower of a veteran who did not serve in time of war would receive this deduction after the veteran's death.

The amendment also extends the 100 percent property tax exemption for disabled veterans to veterans who became disabled during peacetime military service. Persons who became disabled during peacetime military service and reside in a continuing care retirement community would not receive the 100 percent exemption for disabled veterans.

Currently, these property tax deductions and exemptions are only given to veterans who served during time of war. The amendment would give the deductions and exemptions to veterans who did not serve in wartime.

State Public Question 3

Constitutional Amendment to Change the Legislative Redistricting Schedule If Census Data Is Delayed

Do you approve amending the Constitution to change when new legislative districts are created if the federal census data is delayed?

The current COVID-19 pandemic has delayed census data collection. If New Jersey does not receive the census data in a timely manner, new legislative districts may not be ready in time for State legislative elections in the year ending in one.

This change to the redistricting schedule will allow legislators to be elected that year from their existing districts for their two-year term in office. The new districts will be used starting with the next scheduled general election for the State legislature.

Interpretive Statement

This constitutional amendment changes when new legislative districts are created if the federal census data is delayed.

The United States Constitution requires that a census be taken every ten years to count the people living in the country. Census data is then used to create new legislative districts to ensure residents have equal representation from elected officials. However, the current COVID-19 pandemic has delayed census data collection. This may delay census data to the states and may affect the creation of new legislative districts.

The State Constitution requires an Apportionment Commission to create new legislative districts every ten years after the federal census is completed. If the census data is delayed, the new legislative districts may not be created in a timely manner to hold elections.

This constitutional amendment requires the commission to delay creating the new districts if the Governor receives the federal census data after February 15 of the year ending in one. The commission will adopt the new districts after the November general election, but not later than March 1 of the year ending in two.

The new districts will be used starting with legislative elections in the year ending in three. They will continue to be used until new districts are again created by the Apportionment Commission after the next federal census.

For the June primary and November general elections in the year ending in one, Senators and Assembly members will use their existing districts to run for a term of two years. The old districts will also be in effect in the year ending in two if any legislative election is held in that year.

This amendment requires the commission to begin conducting its business when the Governor receives the census data. It also requires the eleventh member of the commission to be appointed by the Chief Justice of the New Jersey Supreme Court within one month after the Governor receives the census data.

Nothing in this amendment will alter the appointment of the members of the commission made by the State political party chairs pursuant to Article IV, Section III, paragraph 1 of the State Constitution on or before November 15, and certified by the Secretary of State on or before December 1, of the year in which the census is taken.