

The 2008 election was important for America's children and their families. While the most obvious opportunity for individuals to vote for issues that affect kids was by supporting particular candidates, many states also had ballot initiatives that were critical to the health and well-being of America's children.



This year's ballot initiatives ranged from high-profile measures where millions were invested to unknown, unadvertised initiatives that were often complicated and confusing to voters.

Below is a summary of the 2008 statewide ballot initiatives from across the country that affect American children and families.





ARKANSAS

Arkansas voted on two ballot initiatives dealing with adoption and education. Both were approved by the voters.

-  **Initiative Act 1: LGBT Equality:** Providing that an individual who is cohabiting outside of a valid marriage may not adopt or be a foster parent of a child less than eighteen years old.
-  **Amendment 3: Hope for Arkansas Scholarship Lottery:** Allowing state lotteries to fund scholarships and grants for Arkansas citizens enrolled in certified two-year and four year colleges and universities in Arkansas.


CALIFORNIA

California approved a bond initiative for Children's Hospitals and defeated a proposition that would have created a waiting period and parental notification for minors before an abortion.

-  **Proposition 3: Children's Hospital Bond Act:** Authorizes \$980,000,000 in general obligation bonds for construction, expansion, remodeling, renovation, furnishing and equipping of eligible children's hospitals.
-  **Proposition 4: Waiting period and parental notification before termination of a minor's pregnancy:** Changes California's Constitution, prohibiting abortion for unemancipated minors until 48 hours after physician notifies minor's parent, legal guardian, or, in limited cases, substitute adult relative.


COLORADO

Colorado voters defeated an Amendment to the Constitution that dedicating any left over school funding at the end of the year into a savings account for education, rather than the general fund.

-  **Amendment 59: Savings Account for Education:** Requiring that any revenue that the state would otherwise be required to refund pursuant to the constitutional limit on state fiscal year spending be transferred instead to the state education fund.

MAINE

Maine citizens repealed a law to pay for Maine's Dirigo Health Program by charging health insurance companies a fixed fee on paid claims, and taxing malt liquor, wine and soft drinks.

-  **Question 1: People's Veto of Parts D, E and F of P.L. 2007 Chapter 629, "An Act To Continue Maine's Leadership in Covering the Uninsured."**

MARYLAND

Maryland voters approved an initiative to allow the government to grant licenses for slot machines. The purpose of this would be to raise revenue for Pre-K through 12 public schools, including construction and improvements, as well as construction of capital projects at community colleges and higher education institutions.



Question 2: Authorizing Video Lottery Terminals (Slot Machines) to Fund Education

MISSOURI

Missouri passed an initiative to create an education fund from gambling tax proceeds.



Proposition A: Schools First Elementary and Secondary Education Improvement Fund

MONTANA

Montana voters approved an initiative to expand health coverage for uninsured children through the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Montana Medicaid Program, and employer-sponsored health insurance.



I-155: The Healthy Kids Plan Act

NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota enacted a measure to establish a tobacco prevention and control advisory/executive committee. The initiative would also allow for the development and funding of comprehensive statewide tobacco prevention and control plan as well as for the creation of a tobacco prevention and control trust fund to receive tobacco settlement dollars to be administered by the executive committee.



Measure 3: Tobacco Prevention Act

OREGON

Oregon voters rejected two measures that would affect public school students and teachers. One measure would have prohibited any foreign language from being taught for more than two years except for instances of teaching foreign languages to English speaking students. The second measure would eliminate seniority as a criterion for teacher pay raises, instead requiring that pay raises be based solely on undefined classroom performance. In addition, the act would have mandated that classroom performance, not seniority, be the criteria used when reducing staff.



Measure 58: Prohibits teaching public school student in a language other than English for more than two years (with the exception of teaching foreign languages to English speakers).



Measure 60: Economic Security, Teacher "classroom performance," not seniority, determines pay raises; "most qualified" teachers retained regardless of seniority.

First Focus is a bipartisan children's advocacy organization that is committed to making children and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions.

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