

# Wyoming League of Women Voters' Guide to Ballot Issues 2006

This guide was prepared by Marguerite Herman for the League of Women Voters of Wyoming. It includes information about three amendments to the Wyoming Constitution, judges standing for retention and other voting issues.

Material does not necessarily reflect opinions of LWV.  
Learn more about LWV-Wyoming at [www.lariat.org/LWV](http://www.lariat.org/LWV).

## Vote Election Day November 7

### Qualifications to vote in Wyoming:

- Citizen of the United States
- 18 years old by Election Day
- Resident of Wyoming
- Not adjudicated mentally incompetent
- Not convicted of a felony
- People convicted of a non-violent felony might be eligible for restoration of voting rights. Contact the Wyoming Board of Parole.

### Registering to Vote

- ✓ You may register at the polls on Election Day. (Bring a photo ID.)
- ✓ You are registered for 2006 if you voted in the 2004 general election.
- ✓ If you move to a different precinct or change your name, notify your county clerk.
- ✓ If you move to a different county, re-register.

More voting information on other side. 

## Constitutional Amendments

Three proposed amendments to the Wyoming Constitution are on the ballot. Here are descriptions of the amendments as printed on the ballot, with further explanation and statements by supporters and opponents.

Remember: an amendment requires majority approval by all people who vote in the election. If you don't vote for an amendment, the non-vote counts against the amendment, just as a "no" vote would.

### Amendment A

*Article 15, Section 19. Mineral excise tax; distribution*  
**Ballot Language**

Adoption of this amendment could clarify that all money deposited in the Permanent Wyoming Mineral Trust Fund are inviolate permanent funds of the state.

#### Explanation

The Wyoming Constitution now requires the Legislature to deposit 1.5 percent of mineral severance taxes into the PWMTF. The fund is "inviolable," meaning it cannot be used. Interest on the fund goes into the state treasury. This amendment would ensure that any additional money the Legislature deposited in the PWMTF, above the constitutional requirement, would be "inviolable," as well, meaning that it could not be used at a later time.

#### Pro

The Permanent Wyoming Mineral Trust Fund is a consistent source of state income. As energy booms come and go, the permanent fund continues to produce interest income. The more the Legislature puts in the trust fund

during good times, the less chance of a tax increase in lean times. Why permanent? Otherwise, when energy-related income slows down, future legislators are likely use the money to fund state programs. That would undermine the consistent interest income from the fund. -- *By House Speaker Randall Luthi, R-Freedom*

#### Con

The Legislature already treats the deposits it makes to the PWMTF as permanent. Do we need to amend the Constitution to keep the current policy in place?

Beyond that, Wyoming residents should consider if they want to put the additional deposits off-limits forever. There may come a day when the Legislature will need that money to operate government, by withdrawing it or using it as collateral and security for critical state needs. If this amendment passes and Wyoming faces a genuine dire emergency, the Legislature may have to cut government services drastically or raise taxes. Changing the Constitution to prevent future legislative action could have long-term, unknown consequences. -- *State Sen. Jayne Mockler, D-Cheyenne*

### Amendment B

*Article 15, Section 17. County levy for support and maintenance of public schools*  
**Ballot Language**

The Wyoming Supreme Court has held that school funding must be equalized among all school districts in the state. Adoption of this amendment would repeal the current limitation on the amount of property tax revenues that may be redistributed by the state through the School Foundation Program Account from school districts with greater property tax revenues to other school districts in the state.

#### Explanation

The state requires every school district to collect 6 mills in property taxes for education. Revenue varies greatly according to local property wealth. Districts put "surplus" revenue (more than guaranteed by a state funding formula) into a statewide fund that supports other districts. Currently, the Constitution lets districts keep the surplus that exceeds a certain amount per pupil. As a result, districts with great revenue wealth per pupil are retaining surpluses that far exceed the amount guaranteed by the funding formula.

Voters defeated a similar amendment in 2004.

#### Pro

The Wyoming Supreme Court has ruled that, under the Wyoming Constitution, the state's mineral wealth should benefit all school children, wherever they live. The court also has ruled that funding for schools must be adequate, equitable and cost-based. All tax revenue beyond a district's needs, computed by the funding formula, should be available to support schools in other parts of the state.

Amendment B will correct a serious funding inequity among school districts. -- *Wyoming Education Association & Equality State Policy Center*

#### Con

The school funding formula covers basic costs, and it's not enough for districts coping with energy boom growth and demands for more teachers and classrooms. They need extra dollars. Also, there's no guarantee extra money collected by the state would go to school districts or any other educational purpose.

School districts with high tax revenue per student already send millions of dollars to the state. Voting "no" on Amendment B will keep extra local tax dollars under the control of local school boards. -- *Vern McAdams, Business Manager, Sublette School District 1*

# Amendment C



Article 15, Section 20. Higher education trust funds; investments; earnings

## Ballot Language

This amendment authorizes the creation of permanent funds for two purposes: First, higher education scholarships, which include the current Hathaway scholarship program; and second, improving the quality of higher education. The principal in the funds, regardless of the source of the funds, cannot be expended. The earnings must be used for the purposes specified and the Legislature is authorized to regulate how the earnings are used. Earnings from funds in the current Hathaway student scholarship account are intended to be used for college scholarships. The amendment would also allow the funds to be invested as the Legislature authorizes, including in stocks.

## Explanation

With this amendment, the Legislature could create a permanent fund to support Hathaway scholarships and improvement of education at the University of Wyoming and community colleges. The Legislature would decide the source and amount of deposits to the fund. Income from interest and investments would pay for scholarships and improvement programs.

## Pro

Amendment C would ensure that that funds needed for the popular Hathaway scholarships could not be diverted to other uses in lean years. This amendment would secure funds for improving the education available at Wyoming's university and community colleges. Appropriately, the Legislature will decide what those improvements will be.

The state's ability to invest the trust fund in stocks would mean higher income from the fund and more money for scholarships and endowed chairs. -- *By the Equality State Policy Center*

**There is no organized opposition to this amendment.**

# Judicial Retention



Judges in Wyoming are appointed by the governor. Subsequently, they "stand for retention" in the general election to stay on the bench. Circuit Court judges stand for retention every four years, District Court judges every six years and Supreme Court justices every eight years.

The Wyoming State Bar asks its member lawyers to rate performances of judges every election year. Read results of the 2006 Judicial Advisory Poll on the Bar's Web site, [www.wyomingbar.org](http://www.wyomingbar.org). Judges standing for retention in 2006, according to the Secretary of State's office, are:

## Wyoming Supreme Court

E. James Burke  
Michael Golden

## State Circuit Court

First District (Laramie County)	Thomas Campbell
First District (Laramie County)	Roberta Coates
First District (Laramie County)	Denise Nau
Second District (Carbon County)	Jane Eakin
Second District (Albany County)	Robert A. Castor
Third District (Lincoln County)	Frank J. Zebre
Third District (Sweetwater County, Gr.River)	E. Victoria Schofield
Fifth District (Park County)	Bruce B. Waters
Seventh District (Natrona County)	Michael N. Patchen
Eighth District (Goshen County)	Randal R. Arp
Ninth District (Fremont County, Riverton)	Wesley A. Roberts

## State District Court

First District (Laramie County)	Edward L. Grant
First District (Laramie County)	Nicholas G. Kalokathis
First District (Laramie County)	Peter G. Arnold
Second District (Carbon County)	Wade E. Waldrip
Sixth District (Campbell County)	Michael "Nick" Deegan
Seventh District (Natrona County)	David B. Park
Eighth District (Goshen County)	Keith G. Kautz

# Information About Voting in Wyoming



**Voting Absentee:** You may vote absentee for any reason. Ask your county clerk for an absentee ballot. Return by 7 p.m. Election Day.

**Write-In Votes:** You may vote for someone whose name is not on your ballot. Write the person's name in the space provided, or type in the name on electronic voting machines.

**Voting Assistance:** If you need assistance because of a disability or inability to read or write English, you may get help from a person of your choice. Ask your county clerk about accessibility at your polling place.

**Voting Location:** Call your county clerk's office or check the clerk's Web site, if available. See contact info below.

## Wyoming County Clerks



<b>Albany County Clerk Jackie Gonzales</b> <a href="http://www.co.albany.wy.us">www.co.albany.wy.us</a>	721-2541	<b>Lincoln county Clerk Jeanne Wagner</b> <a href="http://www.lcwy.org">www.lcwy.org</a>	877-9056
<b>Big Horn County Clerk Dori Noyes</b> <a href="http://www.bighorncountywy.gov">www.bighorncountywy.gov</a>	568-2357	<b>Natrona County Clerk Mary Ann Collins</b> <a href="http://www.natrona.net">www.natrona.net</a>	235-9206
<b>Campbell County Clerk Susan Saunders</b> <a href="http://ccg.co.campbell.wy.us">http://ccg.co.campbell.wy.us</a>	682-7285	<b>Niobrary County Clerk Becky Freeman</b> <a href="mailto:www.nicc@state.wy.us">www.nicc@state.wy.us</a>	334-2211
<b>Carbon County Clerk Linda Smith</b> <a href="http://www.carboncounty.wy.gov">www.carboncounty.wy.gov</a>	328-2668	<b>Park County Clerk Karen Carter</b> <a href="http://www.parkcountyelections.net">www.parkcountyelections.net</a>	527-8600
<b>Converse County Clerk Lucile Taylor</b> <a href="http://www.conversecounty.org">www.conversecounty.org</a>	358-2244	<b>Platte County Clerk Jean Dixon</b>	322-2315
<b>Crook County Clerk Connie Tschetter</b>	283-1323	<b>Sheridan County Clerk Audrey Koltiska</b> <a href="http://sheridancounty.com">http://sheridancounty.com</a>	674-2500
<b>Fremont County Clerk Julie Freese</b> <a href="http://www.fremontcounty.org">www.fremontcounty.org</a>	332-2405	<b>Sublette County Clerk Mary Lankford</b>	367-4372
<b>Goshen County Clerk Connie Addie</b> <a href="http://goshencounty.org">http://goshencounty.org</a>	532-4051	<b>Sweetwater County Clerk L. Bobbie Bailiff</b> <a href="http://www.co.sweet.wy.us">www.co.sweet.wy.us</a>	872-6400
<b>Hot Springs County Clerk Hans Odde</b> <a href="http://www.hscounty.org">www.hscounty.org</a>	864-3515	<b>Teton County Clerk Sherry L. Daigle</b> <a href="http://www.tetonwyo.org">www.tetonwyo.org</a>	733-4430
<b>Johnson County Clerk Linda Barnhart</b> <a href="http://www.johnsoncountywyoming.org">www.johnsoncountywyoming.org</a>	684-7272	<b>Uinta County Clerk Lynne Fox</b> <a href="http://www.uintacounty.com">www.uintacounty.com</a>	783-0306
<b>Laramie County Clerk Debbye Lathrop</b> <a href="http://laramiecountyclerk.com">http://laramiecountyclerk.com</a>	633-4260	<b>Washakie County Clerk Mary Grace Strauch</b> <a href="http://www.washakiecounty.net">www.washakiecounty.net</a>	347-3131
		<b>Weston County Clerk Paulette Thompson</b>	746-4744