



Pluribus AM: The battle over the ballot initiative

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Good morning, it's **Thursday, August 6, 2026**. In today's edition, ballot measures on the ballot; North Carolina advances election reform bill; Dem leads Iowa governor's race:

Top News

BALLOT INITIATIVES: Fans and critics of the ballot initiative are supporting measures in at least nine states to make serious changes to the initiative process

in this year's midterm elections. Supporters of direct democracy are backing measures in Arkansas and Montana to enshrine the right to the initiative process. Republicans are backing measures in North Dakota, South Dakota and Utah to raise the threshold by which ballot measures pass. ([Pluribus News](#))

ELECTIONS: The North Carolina House has approved an elections reform package on a party-line vote. The bill reduces early voting during primaries and runoffs from 17 days to 10. The bill allows challenges to ballots cast during early voting or by mail, and it removes the ability of someone to challenge the cancellation of their registrations if a federal database says they are deceased. ([NC Newsline](#))

REDISTRICTING: Opponents of a new congressional map in Missouri have asked a judge to prohibit the state from using the new district lines in November's midterm elections and restore a ballot measure asking voters to overturn the new map. The suit comes a day after Secretary of State Denny Hoskins (R) declared a referendum seeking to ban the new map unconstitutional. ([Missouri Independent](#))

ANTITRUST: A federal judge in Oakland has scheduled a trial in the antitrust case against the merger between Paramount and Warner Bros. Discovery for March 2027. The lawsuit, spearheaded by California Attorney General Rob Bonta (D) and other Democratic attorneys general, seeks to block the proposed \$111 billion merger. ([Sacramento Bee](#))

MARIJUANA: A bipartisan coalition of 34 attorneys general is calling on Congress to reject efforts to delay the implementation of a new federal definition of hemp. The definition would close a loophole in the 2018 farm bill that allowed the manufacture of THC and other cannabinoid products under the classification of hemp. ([State Affairs](#))

JUSTICE: The New Mexico Department of Justice has filed a lawsuit against the federal DOJ to gain access to unreacted investigative files related to the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Attorney General Raul Torrez (D) has accused federal officials of delaying the release of records related to Epstein's Zorro Ranch property in Santa Fe. ([Source NM](#))

FOOD ASSISTANCE: A new Minnesota law that went into effect this month will allow food pantries to receive donations of eggs that are past the "best by" or "sell by" date stamped on the carton. The law allows grocers and food retailers to donate eggs up to 30 days past their quality assurance date. ([MPR News](#))

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In Politics & Business

IOWA: A new Emerson College poll finds Auditor Rob Sand (D) leading businessman Zach Lahn (R) 48% to 43% in the race for governor. Independents break for Sand by a 58% to 32% margin. Just 43% approve of President Trump's job performance, while 44% approve of Gov. Kim Reynolds (R). ([Emerson](#))

ARIZONA: Gov. Katie Hobbs (D) will name former Mesa Mayor John Giles as her running mate. Giles, a former Republican, left the GOP in May. He endorsed Hobbs during her first run for office. Arizona is electing a lieutenant governor for the first time in 2026. ([KTAR](#))

KANSAS: Voters on Tuesday rejected a ballot initiative that would have turned state Supreme Court positions into elected offices. About 60% of Kansas voters rejected the move, backed by abortion rights opponents. Supreme Court justices in Kansas are chosen by a committee, who recommend a slate of potential candidates to the governor. ([State Affairs](#))

OHIO: Former state health director Amy Acton (D) raised \$5.9 million for her gubernatorial campaign in the last month, outpacing entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy (R), who raised \$4 million. Ramaswamy still holds a commanding cash edge, with \$30.7 million in the bank against Acton's \$14 million. ([State Affairs](#))

By the Numbers

More than 2.4 million: The number of Michigan voters who cast a ballot in Tuesday's primary elections. About 1.5 million voted in the Democratic gubernatorial primary, while 928,767 voted in the GOP contest. ([State Affairs](#))

More than \$100,000: The amount in bets placed on Connecticut's primary elections next week on prediction market platforms Kalshi and Polymarket. More than half of the total amount wagered is on the Democratic gubernatorial primary between Gov. Ned Lamont (D) and state Rep. Josh Elliott (D). ([NHPR](#))

13.9%: The return on investment the California State Teachers' Retirement System received on its investments in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, up from 8.5% the year before. The fund stood at \$415.4 billion as of June 30. ([Sacramento Bee](#))

Off the Wall

Police near Bordeaux have recovered more than 400 shells and munitions left over from World War II that were exposed by massive wildfires tearing through the region. Some munitions detonated during the fires. ([Weather Channel](#))

A 97-year old British woman has set a new record becoming the oldest wing walker in the world. Betty Bromage has been wing walking six times since she turned 87, her latest coming a year after suffering a stroke. Her feat raised money for the stroke unit at the hospital where she was treated last year. ([UPI](#))

Quote of the Day

"I've been going to Army-Navy in Philadelphia for years; I've had a million cheesesteaks."

— **New Jersey Gov. Mikie Sherrill (D)**, who says the best cheesesteaks in America are at Donkey's Place in Camden, not Philadelphia. ([CBS News](#))

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