



**ARKANSAS
RIGHT TO LIFE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Thurston throws out AR Abortion Amendment for not submitting required documents

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Secretary of State John Thurston has thrown out the proposed abortion amendment due to the petitions’ failure to identify paid canvassers by name as required by state law.

On July 5, Arkansans for Limited Government, the group behind the petition for the abortion amendment stated in an affidavit submitted to the Secretary of State’s office that it had secured the required signatures to add the measure to the Nov. 5 ballot.

In a letter to Luran Cowles, executive director of Arkansans for Limited Government, Secretary of State Thurston said “I have determined that you failed to comply with Ark. Code Ann. § 7-9-III(2). That provision requires the sponsor to submit (1) a statement identifying the paid canvassers by name, and (2) a signed statement indicating that the sponsor has provided a copy of the most recent edition of the Secretary of State’s initiatives and referenda handbook and explained the requirements under Arkansas law for obtaining signatures on the petition to each paid canvasser before the paid canvasser solicited signatures.”

Thurston continued, “You submitted an affidavit attesting that the total number of signatures submitted was 101,325. As a courtesy to you, I instructed my office to determine the initial count of signatures gathered by paid canvassers in your putative submission. That number was 14,143. After removing those signatures, and assuming your attestation as valid, 87,382 volunteer signatures remain – 3,322 signatures less than the required 90,704.”

Rose Mimms, executive director of Arkansas Right to Life, said “We appreciate the diligence of the Secretary of State in the certification process. Though this measure has failed, we expect this is not the end of efforts to once again make abortion legal in our state. Arkansas Right to Life will continue its mission to change hearts and minds and to protect pregnant women and unborn babies in Arkansas on this divisive issue through education and legislation.”

“With the overturn of *Roe v. Wade* on June 24, 2022, Arkansas Right to Life knew that this fight would come to the doorstep of each of the 50 states, and Arkansas would be no exception. We knew we would be a target as we are the No. 1 pro-life state in the nation,” said Mimms. “Arkansas lawmakers had prepared for that June day with Act 309 of 2021 that ended induced legal abortion in all cases except to prevent the death of the mother. As expected, in 2023 the Arkansas Department of Health reported zero abortions for the year.”

Mimms said it was evident as the state battles began after *Roe* was struck down that the work of Arkansas Right to Life over the last 50 years had been extremely successful in changing the hearts and minds of Arkansans. The many pro-life legislation protections put in place for pregnant women and their unborn children – along with the recognition of Arkansas as the most pro-life state for the last four years – would make flipping Arkansas to pro-abortion a goal.

For more information contact Mimms at 501-663-4237 or email artl@artl.org.

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Arkansas Right to Life is the state affiliate of the National Right to Life Committee the oldest and largest pro-life organization. For more information visit artl.org.