



# Third Frontier funding gets OK from voters; reforms rejected

by Mike Murphy  
for Stateline Midwest

The second time was the charm for an Ohio ballot proposal aimed at moving the state to the “third frontier” of economic development.

Two years after voters rejected a proposal to issue \$500 million in bonds for high-tech research and job creation, state leaders returned in 2005 with a different strategy that resonated with a majority of Ohioans.

“We did a better job of explaining how the Third Frontier initiative relates to and translates into jobs,” says Republican Lt. Gov. Bruce Johnson, who also serves as Ohio’s development director.

“And we were able to do a better job showing how it impacts all sectors of the Ohio economy.”

For instance, the Ohio Farm Bureau, which opposed the 2003 proposal, lent its support to the 2005 version.

“Farmers could see how they might benefit from bioproducts [developed through Third Frontier],” says Bill Teets, spokesman for the Ohio Department of Development.

Another difference between 2003 and 2005 was the decision to make the Third Frontier investment part of a larger, \$2 billion bonding proposal. Dubbed the Jobs for Ohio initiative by supporters, this year’s ballot proposal earmarks a majority of funds to traditional infrastructure projects (roads, bridges, etc.).

An ongoing state initiative, Third Frontier is designed to expand Ohio’s high-tech research

capabilities and promote start-up companies. The voter-approved \$500 million will be spent over the next seven years on government partnerships with state universities, health care facilities and businesses.

“We believe that with Third Frontier, we’re creating the infrastructure for a knowledge economy,” Johnson says.

The Issue One proposal faced opposition from groups that believe the initiative unwisely uses taxpayer dollars and will result in the use of state funding for embryonic stem cell research. Supporters deny both claims.

## ‘No’ votes

Four other issues on the Ohio ballot — all of which sought political and electoral reforms — were soundly defeated by voters.


Issue Four, which received the most public attention prior to the election, would have placed redistricting responsibilities in the hands of an independent, five-member commission. Two of the members would have been selected by sitting

judges, and the remaining three would have been appointed by the first two or chosen by lot.

Other ballot proposals sought to expand the use of absentee ballots, change how elections in the state are administered, place new limits on campaign contributions and revise public-disclosure requirements.

All of the reform issues were sponsored by Reform Ohio Now, a coalition of individuals and groups that says more accountability is needed in state government.

“The election raised the awareness level and moved the dialogue in the right direction,” says Keary McCarthy, spokesman for Reform Ohio Now. “We made some progress to reform a system that both Republicans and Democrats agree needs some improvement.”

McCarthy notes, for example, that Ohio legislative leaders intend to look at measures that would change absentee-balloting laws and reform the redistricting process. 

## Results of Ohio vote on ballot issues

Proposal	Brief description	Result
Issue 1	Issue bonds to fund infrastructure projects as well as high-tech research development and job creation	Approved (54%-46%)
Issue 2	Allow no-fault absentee, early voting by mail	Defeated (63%-37%)
Issue 3	Enact tighter restrictions and new prohibitions on political contributions and revise public-disclosure requirements	Defeated (70%-30%)
Issue 4	Create an independent redistricting commission responsible for drawing legislative districts	Defeated (70%-30%)
Issue 5	Create a bipartisan board of supervisors to oversee Ohio elections	Defeated (70%-30%)

Source: Ohio secretary of state’s office

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

One of the many services provided by the Midwestern Office of The Council of State Governments is its Information Help Line, a research service intended to help lawmakers, legislative staff and state officials from across the region. The CSG Midwest staff is always available to respond to members’ inquiries or research needs regarding various public policy issues. The Question of the Month section highlights an inquiry received by this office. To request assistance through CSG Midwest’s Information Help Line, call 630/925-1922 or use the online form available at [www.csghmidwest.org](http://www.csghmidwest.org).

**QUESTION: WHAT STATES IN THE REGION HAVE LEGISLATION REGARDING THE POSSESSION AND CAPTIVITY OF WILD ANIMALS?**

**ANSWER:** Kept as “exotic pets,” wild animals can pose a danger to both their owner and the public at large, as news stories in the past about mauling incidents illustrate. Animal-rights advocates say these animals suffer as well, either because they simply don’t adjust well to captivity or because they sometimes are malnourished or kept in cramped quarters.

Federal, state and local laws offer some protections for the animals and, in some instances, minimal oversight of the owners.

According to the Animal Protection Institute, most legislation related to the possession of wild or exotic species is generated at the state level. The federal government primarily regulates the importation and interstate transportation of wild animals while also setting some minimal care and treatment standards.

According to the institute, 37 states currently have some legislation in place to control the sale, possession and use of captive wild animals. These statutes fall into three broad categories — prohibition, partial prohibition and regulation.

Animals covered by these laws include large cats, bears, wolves, dangerous reptiles such as alligators and crocodiles, and nonhuman primates. Fifteen

states (none in the Midwest) prohibit the possession of these, and sometimes other, animals. Nine states, including **Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota** and **Nebraska**, have partial prohibitions in place. In some states, such as Illinois, possession of many of the aforementioned animals is banned, while in other states, ownership of only a few of these animal types is prohibited.

These states also have regulations in place, such as barring owners from releasing the captive animals into the wild.

Other states have regulations, but no prohibitions, against keeping wild animals as pets. **Indiana, North Dakota** and **South Dakota** are among the 13 U.S. states that require the owner to obtain a license or permit from a state agency.

**Iowa, Kansas, Ohio** and **Wisconsin** are among the 13 states that have few, if any, regulations in place. While Kansas exercises some regulatory authority over a limited number of animals, these states generally have, at most, “entry permit” requirements or expect a check of the animal by a veterinarian.

More information is available on the Animal Protection Institute Web site, [www.api4animals.org](http://www.api4animals.org).