

Removes Governor from parole process for most non-violent offenders

STATE QUESTION NO. 762

Legislative Referendum No. 360

This measure amends Section 10 of Article 6 of the Oklahoma Constitution. It changes current law, decreasing the power and authority of the Governor by removing the Governor from the parole process for persons convicted of certain offenses defined as nonviolent offenses. It enlarges the power and authority of the Pardon and Parole Board by authorizing that Board, in place of the Governor, to grant parole to persons convicted of certain offenses defined as nonviolent offenses.

The Legislature defines what offenses are nonviolent offenses and the Legislature may change that definition.

The measure authorizes the Pardon and Parole Board to recommend to the Governor, but not to itself grant, parole for persons convicted of certain offenses, specifically those offenses identified by law as crimes for which persons are required to serve not less than eighty-five percent of their sentence prior to being considered for parole and those designated by the Legislature as exceptions to nonviolent offenses. For those offenses for which persons are required to serve a minimum mandatory period of confinement prior to being eligible to be considered for parole, the Pardon and Parole Board may not recommend parole until that period of confinement has been served.

SHALL THE PROPOSAL BE APPROVED?

FOR THE PROPOSAL — YES

AGAINST THE PROPOSAL — NO

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS SUPPORTS THIS QUESTION BECAUSE:

- The State of Oklahoma will join all other states in the nation by removing the governor from the parole process for non-violent offenders.
- It will reduce costs by eliminating delays and will reduce the strain on the parole system by making the early parole process for non-violent offenders more effective and efficient.
- It will allow the governor to focus attention on parole cases that raise genuine public safety considerations.
- The League of Women Voters of Oklahoma has long supported the complete removal of the governor from the parole process and sees this measure as a step in the right direction.