



NEWS RELEASE

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List of Ten Costliest State Ballot Questions Now Available on ELEC Statistics Page

An unsuccessful 2016 ballot question that tried to convince voters to allow two new casinos in northern New Jersey remains the most expensive referendum in state history, according to an updated ranking.

The failed effort to let casinos operate outside of Atlantic City drew almost \$24.7 million in spending eight years ago.

The election would cost about \$32.3 million in today’s dollars, according to inflation adjustments applied to the top ten Garden State ballot questions.

Referendum	Outcome	Year	Spending at the Time	Spending- Inflation Adjusted
Allow two new casinos in North Jersey	Failed	2016	\$24,669,426	\$32,281,983
Allow casinos in Atlantic City	Passed	1976	\$ 1,351,865	\$7,461,843
Jersey City short-term rental ballot question	Passed	2019	\$ 5,615,109	\$6,898,038
Increase in state minimum wage	Passed	2013	\$ 3,167,928	\$4,270,951
Allow casinos in four New Jersey locations	Failed	1974	\$ 612,500	\$3,901,973
Allow simulcasting at state race tracks	Passed	1985	\$ 1,006,918	\$2,939,050
Legalize Marijuana Use in New Jersey	Passed	2020	\$ 2,331,969	\$2,829,861
Higher Education Bond Issue	Passed	2012	\$ 2,019,690	\$2,762,799
Build professional baseball stadium	Failed	1987	\$ 593,948	\$1,642,083
Allow sale of Trenton Water Works to private company	Failed	2010	\$ 1,104,799	\$1,591,257

In an interesting coincidence, the second most expensive ballot question in inflation-adjusted numbers was the successful 1976 public measure that allowed casinos to operate solely in Atlantic City. Two of the other top 10 most lavish referenda also involved gambling issues.

For the first time, ELEC is placing the top ten list of ballot questions under the heading “Miscellaneous Comparison Charts” on its Statistics page. <https://www.elec.nj.gov/publicinformation/statistics.htm>.

The page also includes historical statistical information on gubernatorial elections, legislative elections, top spending by independent groups and self-financing candidates and top spending by parties.

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