



# State Questions



## State Question 793: Optometrists



**SQ 793 amends the state constitution to allow optometrists and opticians to operate in retail establishments.**

### **A little bit of background on the issue ...**

SQ 793 prohibits the legislature from enacting laws that discriminate against optometrists and opticians based on where they practice, but it does allow the legislature to prevent surgery (laser or otherwise) in retail-based eye clinics. SQ 793 also allows the legislature to limit the number of locations in which a single optometrist may practice, maintain optometry licenses and require eye clinics to be in a separate room in retail establishments. Currently, state law bans eye clinics from operating inside retail establishments. Oklahoma is one of only three states that prohibits the sale of eye glasses in stores like Walmart, Sam's and Cosco. Thirty-four states allow optometrists to be located within and considered part of such retail outlets.



### **Yes voters say ...**

SQ 793 will provide more choices and better convenience to consumers. It will also increase competition and, in turn, lower prices for glasses and optometric services.



### **No voters say ...**

SQ 793 will drive out smaller, independent optometrists, allowing big-box retailers to eventually raise prices; will give large retail chains an opportunity to limit what services its optometrists provide at the expense of patients; and limit the legislature's ability to correct any unanticipated consequences by placing retail optometry in the state constitution.



## State Question 794: Crime Victims



SQ 794 expands the constitutional rights of crime victims. It's referred to as "Marsy's Law."

### A little bit of background on the issue ...

The ballot language says, in part, "These rights would now be protected in a manner equal to the defendant's rights." The measure would also make changes to victims' rights, including:

1. expanding the court proceedings at which victims have the right to be heard;
2. adding a right to reasonable protection;
3. adding a right to proceedings free from unreasonable delay;
4. adding a right to talk with the prosecutor; and
5. allowing victims to refuse interview requests from the defendant without a subpoena.



### Yes voters say ...

SQ 793 gives victims the same rights afforded by law as those accused of a crime. This constitutional amendment would give victims and families a voice in ways they don't have now (like in plea bargaining) and give them an opportunity to participate in the resolution of their case. The question would also formalize the right of victims to be notified of a defendant's release or escape from custody.



### No voters say ...

SQ 793 would be expensive, as courts would have to hire more staff to meet the demands of the amendment. Similar laws have run into legal challenges in other states, and some opponents believe this state question violates Oklahoma's constitution by adding so many different rights into one measure, an issue commonly described as logrolling.



## State Question 798: Joint Tickets



SQ 798 allows candidates for governor and lieutenant governor to run on the same ticket beginning with the 2026 election.

### A little bit of background on the issue ...

Twenty-six other states have a combined governor/lieutenant governor ticket, and in 18 of those states the governor picks his or her running mate. In the other eight states, separate primaries are held for the two offices with the winners running on one ticket in the general election.



#### Yes voters say ...

SQ 798 makes it more likely that Oklahoma's top two elected officials would have a unified vision and would better work together to implement policies. It would also guarantee that the governor and lieutenant governor would come from the same party and reduce the risk of the two offices working against each other.



#### No voters say ...

SQ 798 eliminates options for state voters and gives the governor too much power. Opponents believe the lieutenant governor position has few important responsibilities and the office should be abolished to save money.



## State Question 800: Energy Revenue



**SQ 800 amends the state constitution to create the Oklahoma Vision Fund with gross production taxes.**

### **A little bit of background on the issue ...**

The Oklahoma Vision Fund would be a new budget reserve fund that would collect 5 percent of the collections from the gross production tax, increasing by two-tenths of a percentage point every year, beginning July 1, 2020. Beginning in 2020, 4 percent of the annual principal amount of the fund over the preceding five years would be deposited in the state's General Revenue Fund. Up to 5 percent of the monies in the Vision Fund could be used to pay for debt obligations of the state or local government entities. The state treasurer would be tasked with investing the fund's money and the fund would be exempt for the constitution's general prohibition on the state owning stock. If passed, SQ 800 will create the state's third "savings account," joining the Constitutional Reserve Fund (aka Rainy Day Fund) and the Revenue Stabilization Fun, which is statutory (non-constitutional).



### **Yes voters say ...**

SQ 800 allows the state to prepare for future declines in oil and gas production, giving that they are depleting resources. They see the question as a long-term approach to ensuring state budget needs can be met and that the Vision Fund is guaranteed to grow over time, creating a growing revenue stream to address long-term needs.



### **No voters say ...**

SQ 800 diverts too much current revenue into a reserve fund, especially when our state already has the Rainy Day Fund and the Revenue Stabilization Fund. While the question says the fund could be used for debt payments for counties, municipalities and other local entities, it doesn't outline who decides to make that kind of payment or how it would be made.



## State Question 801: School Funds



**SQ 801 amends the state constitution by removing restrictions on how school districts use “building fund” money.**

### A little bit of background on the issue ...

Currently, districts may use 5 mills of property tax dollars (ad valorem) for their building funds, which covers maintenance, repairs, upkeep and construction of district facilities and grounds. (Bond elections to build new athletic facilities and new schools and to purchase buses and technology is a completely different, unrelated revenue source for districts.) SQ 801 would allow districts to use the building fund to pay teacher salaries, hire additional staff and make other general revenue expenditures.



### Yes voters say ...

SQ 801 creates more competition between districts, which could be able to pay higher salaries and hire additional teachers. It would give districts great flexibility on how it chooses to spend its money.



### No voters say ...

SQ 801 does not allow a district to raise any new revenue and could place political pressure to ignore needed repairs until they become too damaging to ignore. The question would shift the burden of funding teacher salaries from the legislature to local school boards, and it could cause a greater gap between the haves and the have-nots.