

Arkansas

ARKANSAS

32

Overall Rank

D+

Overall Grade

| Arkansas | Overall Rank | To Governor | To State Senate | To State House | To Parties | To PACs |
|-------------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|
| Individual Giving | 30 | 29 | 23 | 19 | 1 | 34 |
| | | \$2,700/election | \$2,700/election | \$2,700/election | Unlimited | \$5,000/election |
| PAC Giving | 18 | 29 | 23 | 21 | 1 | |
| | | \$2,700/election | \$2,700/election | \$2,700/election | Unlimited | |
| Party Giving | 37 | 39 | 39 | 38 | | |
| | | \$2,700/election | \$2,700/election | \$2,700/election | | |
| Union Giving | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | | |
| | | Prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited | | |
| Corporate Giving | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | | |
| | | Prohibited | Prohibited | Prohibited | | |

Inflation Adjustment: Yes

Arkansas' motto may be "Regnat Populus" – Latin for "the people rule" – but that doesn't stop the state from imposing extremely low limits on the amount its citizens can donate to the candidates and political committees of their choice. As a result, Arkansas earns a poor grade in the Free Speech Index, made worse by a successful 2014 ballot measure that imposed a prohibition on union and corporate giving to candidates. On the bright side, however, the General Assembly further amended the state's contribution laws in 2015, modestly raising the state's limits on giving to candidates from \$2,000 per election to \$2,700 per election and indexing these limits to inflation so that the value of speech doesn't erode over time.

Unfortunately, some in Arkansas seek to continue exploiting the initiative process to further trample on political speech. A proposed 2016 ballot measure contained a wide array of additional and unnecessary regulations applicable to political campaigns and issue groups. Fortunately, this measure never garnered the support it needed to appear on the ballot.

One bright spot for Arkansas is that political parties can raise unlimited amounts from individuals and PACs, but despite this, The Natural State still places among the bottom half of states in the Index.