

#1 [Increased Homestead Property Tax Exemption](#) - would raise the portion of a home's assessed value that can be exempted (except for school property taxes) would apply to the assessed value of a homestead property between \$100,000 and \$125,000 (increases the maximum exemption to \$75,000).

The shift could benefit homeowners with assessed value over \$100,000 an *estimated savings up to \$372*. It will hurt Commercial and Industrial Property Owners, Non-Homestead Residential Property Owners, Homestead Property Owners with Assessed Value less than \$100,000, Tangible Personal Property Owners with value greater than \$25,000. Local governments — which rely on property taxes for revenue — lose about \$645 million (\$4.8 million in Volusia) in the first year if the exemption, effective January 1, is approved. Percentage of Properties that get NO Benefit from Amendment 1 - 90% in Holly Hill to 2% in Ponce Inlet.

Chamber Position: Oppose

#2 [Limitations on Property Tax Assessments](#) – ***permanently*** limits property tax assessment increases on specified non-homestead property (except school district taxes) to 10 % annually.

Whereby homestead properties already benefit from a 3% annual assessment cap (via Constitutional Amendment in 1992), Amendment 2 would affect non-homestead residential properties, such as second homes and rental apartments and non-residential property, such as commercial property and vacant land. Businesses and residential landlords could face large property tax hikes. Voters approved the cap in 2008, passing by 64%, which it is set expire on January 1, 2019.

Chamber Position: Support

#3 [Voter Control of Gambling in Florida](#) - a citizen-initiated amendment, **ensures that *Florida voters* have the right via referendum to decide whether to authorize casino gambling.**

That authority currently rests with both the Legislature and voters, through constitutional amendment. Card games, casino games and slot machines are limited to tribal facilities in most of Florida (some slot machines are allowed at certain pari-mutuel facilities in Broward and Miami-Dade counties). The Legislature tried in recent years to pass gambling bills to address the state's agreement with the Seminole Tribe and allow for some expansion of casinos but negotiations failed (the House, more opposed to gambling, rejected the Senate's proposals). Proponents want to prevent construction of any Las Vegas style destination resort casinos both of which Disney and Seminoles see as competition.

Chamber Position: Neutral

#4 [Voting Restoration](#) restores the voting rights of Floridians with felony convictions after they complete all terms of their sentence including parole or probation;

It would not apply to those convicted of murder or sexual offenses, who would continue to be permanently barred from voting unless the Governor and Cabinet vote to restore their voting rights on a case by case basis. The current process can take a decade or more whereby a state clemency board considers each request during their four meetings a year.

In Florida, the first law to take voting rights away from convicted felons was passed in 1838. Those opposed to Amendment 4 argue it's the price felons pay for breaking the law.

However, there is a challenge to the amendment currently before the US Circuit Court of Appeals (Atlanta). Arguments in the legal case are expected to be heard this month (July), but it's questionable if the case will be resolved the November 6 election. If passed, about 1.5 million people in Florida could be affected.

Chamber Position: Neutral

#5 [Supermajority Vote Required to Impose, Authorize, or Raise State Taxes or Fees](#) – **would require a two-thirds super-majority vote in the Legislature to impose, approve or raise state taxes and fees.**

A higher threshold means a third of House OR Senate members could prevent any future tax increases or repeal existing exemptions. It would also stop any provisions to raise taxes or fees from being tacked onto other state bills; does not apply to any fees/taxes that would be levied by local governments or agencies, such as school districts.

Chamber Position: Support

#6 [Victims' rights; judges' retirement age; Judicial interpretation](#) (3 segments)

A) Would create a bill of rights for crime victims.

B) Increases mandatory retirement age for judges to 75 from 70, effective July 1, 2019.

C) Judicial interpretation of statutes and rules.

A) The amendment would “cement” into the Constitution a “crime victim bill of rights” which allows victims of crime to ‘opt-in’ to receive notification of all legal proceedings, and the rights of privacy, attend trials or any other public proceedings and testify at pretrial release, sentencing or parole hearings, and to be protected from harassment....it's based on Marsy's Law (Marsy Nicholas of California was murdered by her ex-boyfriend in 1983 which initiated the victim rights push nationwide).

This has major Republican/Democratic support but has drawn criticism that the way victims' rights are drawn might inundate the justice system with additional responsibilities.

Proponents believe Courts have shifted too far to protect rights of criminal defendants and that victims deserve a stronger voice. Opponents i.e. defense attorneys argue giving victims a greater voice in criminal proceedings turns them into emotional rather than legal proceedings. As of 2018, all but 15 states, including Florida, include victims' rights in their constitutions. This portion of Amendment 6 has been endorsed by 10 state attorneys, numerous county sheriffs and clerks of court.

B) Raises the retirement age for Judges from 70 to 75 also requires them to step down immediately upon reaching that age than completing their terms. The intent is to avoid situations were multiple judges on a single court must step down at the same time.

C) Would bar judges from deferring to administrative agencies' interpretations of a rule or statute when ruling in cases involving those laws/rules if the legislature has not yet addressed it.

Chamber Position: Neutral

#7 [First responder and higher education:](#) (3 segments)

A) Provides college tuition for survivors of law enforcement officers, paramedics, correctional officers and Florida National Guard killed on duty;

B) Requires university trustees to agree by a 2/3 super-majority to raise college fees (not including tuition)

C) Establishes the state college system in Florida's Constitution

A) Ensures death benefits are paid to responder and Florida National Guard members killed on the job and requires the state to waive "certain higher education expenses" for their children.

B) Makes it harder for universities to impose or raise fees by requiring at least nine votes to do so from the University's Board of Trustees or at least 12 votes from the Board of Governors. Making it tougher for universities to raise fees could also limit a school's ability to raise money and invest in new facilities and faculty recruitment.

C) Attempts to narrow scope of the State's 28 community colleges and requires them to serve as the starting point to baccalaureate degrees and on aligning degree programs with regional workforce needs. This could help avoid duplication of resources between universities and community colleges but it could open the door for the legislature to micromanage them. Universities are in the State Constitution, state colleges - community colleges - are not.

Chamber Position: Neutral

#8 [School Board Term Limits and Duties; Public Schools](#) (3 segments)

A) Imposes a new eight-year term limit for school board members;

B) Expand civics education in public schools;

C) Enables charter schools to bypass local school boards by expanding the state's authority to control and supervise them.

A) School board term limits mean more turnover and provide fresh blood in public office but could also shift power to from elected officials to more knowledgeable administrators and lobbyists.

B) As for the Civics class requirement, each new instructional mandate from the state leads to a cut elsewhere (time and money constraints).

C) While it exempts state-created charter schools from oversight by local school boards, it could also allow the state to create a new entity that could approve new charter schools over the opposition of local school boards.

Chamber Position: Neutral

#9 [Prohibits Offshore Oil and Gas Drilling; Prohibits Vaping in Enclosed Indoor Workplaces](#) (2 segments)

- A) Oil and gas-drilling would be banned in state-owned waters
- B) Vaping banned from indoor workplaces;

A) Governor Rick Scott, US Dept of Environmental Protection Secretary Noah Valenstein and members of Florida's congressional delegation (Democrats and Republicans) have denounced the possibility of opening to drilling nearly all of the nation's outer continental shelf i.e. submerged lands 10.36 statutory miles off Florida's west coast and 3 nautical miles off the east coast.

January 9 in Tallahassee, US Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke announced drilling would not occur off the Florida coast. But the Trump administration's stance has not been formalized and continues to draw questions.

Offshore oil/gas drilling has been prohibited by law since 1988, but a constitutional amendment would represent a more permanent ban.

Environmentalists support a drilling ban to protect against oil spills while oil industry representatives argue fuel development is an important economic driver and to curtail drilling increases nation's reliance on foreign oil.

B) A 2002 amendment already bans smoking in workplaces however; supporters say it's a logical extension to add e-cigarettes (which were not on the market when the original 2002 amendment passed).

Chamber Position: Support

#10 [State and Local Government Structure and Operation](#) (4 segments)

- A) Requires the state's legislative session start in January rather than March in even-numbered years (the legislature currently changes its dates by statute);
- B) Creates a counter-terrorism office within the Florida Dept of Law Enforcement.
- C) "Cements" a State Dept of Veterans Affairs into the State Constitution.
- D) Require five county-level offices to be elected (all of the county positions — tax collectors, property appraisers, supervisors of elections and clerks of circuit court — are already elected in many counties).

A) It fixes the legislatures recent practice of shifting the start of their sessions in even-numbered years to January vs March.

D) Volusia operates with a Council/Manager form of government whereby the County Council *develops policy* and the County Manager *administers that policy* on a day-to-day basis.

Stetson University professor/Volusia Charter draftsman T. Wayne Bailey believes Amendment 10 could have unintended consequences. Before the County Charter was adopted in 1970 was approved, individual county commissioners had the authority to hire and fire employees and make laws.

Meanwhile, Sheriff Mike Chitwood and the Florida Sheriffs Association support the Amendment 10....“We want a statewide referendum on this. This isn’t only about me.” Chitwood opposes Volusia County’s Charter because of the non-constitutional standing he and other elected officers now have. (from West Volusia Beacon).

Local officials say it undermines principle of home rule while supporters argue these elected officials would be more responsive to the public.

Broward County, Volusia County and two members of Volusia County’s home-rule charter have sued in the Leon County Circuit Court to keep the amendment off your ballot. No specific court date for it to be heard. County Attorney Dan Eckert said the ruling, whichever way it goes, may likely be appealed to the 1st District Court of Appeal, and possibly the Florida Supreme Court.

Chamber Position: Oppose

#11 [Property Rights; Removal of Obsolete Provision; Criminal Statutes](#) (3 segments)

- A) Would revise the Constitution to remove a provision that stops “aliens ineligible for citizenship” from owning property;**
- B) Approves a high-speed rail system;**
- C) Clarifies that repealing a criminal statute would not retroactively affect the prosecution of a crime committed previously.**

A) Whereas Florida adopted Alien Land Laws in 1910s and 20s in an effort to prevent Asian immigrants from owning property, Amendment 11 would repeals a 92 year old legislation barring immigrants who are not eligible for citizenship from owning property.

B) Deletes a previous constitutional amendment ordering the construction of a high-speed train that voters already voted to repeal. Voters approved in 2000 a constitutional amendment for a bullet train from Orlando to Tampa. However, a 2004 Constitutional Amendment was approved to repeal that same train. However, actual language was never removed from the constitution.

C) It allows legislature to make some changes to criminal laws retroactive. Proponents say it would ensure that prisoners punished under older stricter laws could have their sentences revised when the legislature makes legal changes i.e. eliminating mandatory sentences.

Chamber Position: Neutral

#12 [Ethics: Lobbying and Abuse of Office by Public Officers](#) (2 segments)

- A) Bars public officials from lobbying both during their terms and for 6 years afterwards;**
- B) Restricts current public officers from using their office for personal gain.**

A) Prevent the Governor, Cabinet officials, Agency administrators, Legislators and Local Elected officials from lobbying former colleagues for six years after they leave office; the same six-year ban would apply to Justices/Judges.

While the Florida League of Women Voters believes there is a need for lobbying reform, it also felt that the proposed six-year ban might be burdensome, and this amendment fails to address the real issue — the impact of money in political campaigns. However, the League took no official stand on this amendment.

B) Requires stricter ethical standards for public officers/employees i.e. forbidding them from abusing their positions to benefit themselves, family, employer or business.

Chamber Position: Neutral; while the Chamber supports ethics, this measure should not part of the Constitution

#13 [Ends Dog racing](#) after 2020.

▪ **Would end commercial dog racing involving wagering by 2020**

Massachusetts-based Grey2K is a major supporter of Amendment 13 which would end wagered greyhound racing in Florida. Grey2K and the US Humane Society want racing banned and claim the dogs are abused, something greyhound owners deny.

It is opposed by the [Committee to Support Greyhounds](#), a group of owners/breeders formed to “promote greyhound welfare, racing, and adoption, as well as educating the public regarding the life of racing greyhounds”, claims the language is misleading and fails to inform voters that ending greyhound racing would allow 12 Florida tracks to convert their facilities into “mini-casinos” – containing poker rooms and slot machines.

While greyhound racing isn’t as popular as in the past, passage of this amendment would result in an annual loss of approximately \$1 million in revenue from taxes and fees.

The amendment would put greyhound owners/breeders would put them out of business.

The Committee to Support Greyhounds has sued seeking to remove the amendment from the ballot). A hearing is set for August 29 before the Florida Supreme Court, which will decide if voters will have the chance to approve or deny the amendment.

Chamber Position: Oppose