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Ron DeSantis Updates Florida on 2026 Plan for Property Tax Vote

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America's Property Tax Headache

01:30

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Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has said that he is working on a "concrete proposal" to drastically cut or even eliminate property taxes in the state, an initiative that he has pledged to put before voters next year.

"I think that property taxes have pinched a lot of people, and I think we got to do something about it," DeSantis said during a news conference in Tampa. "All I will say to that is, stay tuned. I'm already working with folks, we are crunching numbers, we're doing all these different things. But you are going to have an opportunity to get this done in November 2026," he added.

Why Does Florida Want to End Property Taxes?

Florida is just one of several Republican-led states trying to significantly cut or even abolish the property tax, including Illinois, Kansas, Montana, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

This nationwide movement is "largely a response to the run-up in house prices, particularly in the suburbs and exurbs, that followed the pandemic," David

Schleicher, Walter E. Meyer professor of property and urban law at Yale Law School, told *Newsweek*.

"During and after the pandemic, there was a huge increase in housing demand—both from new household formations and for more square footage, as well as some increased willingness to commute further distances. Basically, people didn't want roommates and wanted more space," Schleicher said.

This surge in demand for housing drove home prices up across the country—especially in those markets, like Florida, which saw a spike in domestic migration thanks to the rise of remote work, which allowed many movers to relocate to the sunny, relatively affordable state.

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"This sounds great for homeowners, and it was, but because property taxes are based on property wealth…property taxes on homeowners in a variety of jurisdictions went up—not the rates necessarily, but the amounts," Schleicher said.

"Property taxes are based on wealth, not income, though, and as a result, property taxes as a percentage of income increased for homeowners in areas where property prices increased. Homeowners got angry about this increase in annual taxes and are a powerful force in politics," he said.

DeSantis spoke about this "major boom" in Florida's housing market over the past five years, and the impact it has had on local homeowners.

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"What happened is that someone that bought a house for $300,000 10 years ago is now being told their house is worth $750,000. That's an unrealized gain, you haven't sold your house for that much. But somehow your property tax bill is going up," he said on Tuesday.

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"If you bought a house over the past couple of years, you're paying more for property taxes than you would have just a few years ago, by a significant amount," he added.

"If you're a Florida resident, and you have a primary residence here, your homesteaded property, I think you should be able to own that free and clear of the government," DeSantis said.

Abolishing property taxes on Florida homeowners would put "a thumb on the scale in favor of traditional homeownership," DeSantis said, allowing more everyday Floridians to purchase those same homes that, he said, are now mostly affordable to investors.



Florida Governor Ron DeSantis on May 1, 2025, in Miramar, Florida. **JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES**

Can Florida Abolish the Property Tax?

Florida cannot eliminate property taxes in the state without introducing a constitutional amendment approved by 60 percent of voters.

DeSantis said on Tuesday that he was working on "a proposal to go on the ballot in 2026," adding that he has talked with lawmakers about it and they are "excited about being able to do it." Both the Florida House and Senate, he said, are now onboard with the initiative.

More relief would come, meanwhile, from the Department of Government's Efficiency's audits of local governments spending, DeSantis suggested, whose results are soon to be released.

"These local governments…their budgets go up 60 percent. You ask yourself, why? Because people buy homes, it's a gusher of revenue going into the coffers. Rather than return that money to the taxpayers, they spend it!," the governor said, echoing similar accusations made against local governments by Florida's Chief Financial Officer Blaise Ingoglia earlier this month.

"What I think taxpayers want from local governments is—we want education, 100 percent. We want law enforcement, fire and other first respondents. 100 percent. But we don't need some of this stuff that's been spent money on," DeSantis said.

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