



AMENDMENTS

LABOR 2018 BALLOT GUIDE

	YES	NO
#1 Increased Homestead Property Tax Exemption ————— OPPOSE - Increases the amount of a home's value that is exempted from property taxes from \$100,000 to \$125,000 for all levies except school districts. While this may save homeowners a few hundred dollars, it will critically cut funds for public services such as infrastructure, safety and other services. An estimate by legislative staff estimates a loss to local governments of \$645 million in the first year and is expected to increase in the future, forcing municipalities to potentially seek funding through other measures, such as sales tax increases.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
#2 Limitations on Property Tax Assessments ————— OPPOSE - This would make permanent the existing cap of 10% per year on non-homestead assessments set to expire January 2019. As with any type of limitation on property taxes, local governments will be affected by a loss of funding for local services. The Revenue Estimating Conference estimates this will cost local governments \$688 million annually. The primary beneficiaries of this cap have been wealthy companies with expensive properties in prime markets.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
#3 Voter Control of Gambling in Florida ————— OPPOSE - Brought to the ballot by a citizen's group, this amendment would put the right in the hands of voters to expand casino games and slots outside tribal facilities. Concerns are that such measures should remain within the power of the Florida Legislature. This change could force expensive elections any time a change is sought in Florida's gambling laws.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
#4 Voting Restoration Amendment ————— SUPPORT - Restores the voting rights of Floridians with felony convictions once completing all terms of their sentence, except those convicted of murder or sexual offenses. This replaces the current arbitrary (and politically charged) process of reinstatement by the Governor and Cabinet.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



YES

NO

#5 Supermajority Required to Impose, Authorize or Raise State Taxes or Fees

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OPPOSE - If approved, this amendment will permanently tie legislators' hands to increase taxes by requiring a 2/3 vote versus the current simple majority. Absent an income tax, there are few means of raising revenue for state-funded services, especially education, hurricane crises, environmental cleanup, etc. Opposition to this measure is a priority; other states' efforts (Taxpayer Bill of Rights/TABOR) to similarly limit legislators' ability to raise taxes or fees has had a devastating, long-term effect. This change will make it impossible for future legislatures to deal with the over \$5 billion in special interest tax exemptions and loopholes. The creation of new exemptions and special interest tax cuts would not be affected.

#6 Rights of Crime Victims; Judges

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OPPOSE - There are three aspects (bundled) to this measure: victims' rights, increased retirement age for judges and disallows government agencies to interpret the law. Victims are already protected by law and state statutes. The amendment also gives more power to corporations who now will be considered victims and provides no new funding or services for victim's of domestic or sexual violence. Another aspect of the amendment causing great concern is the inability of judges to be free to defer to government agencies when cases affecting such are brought before the court.

#7 First Responder & Military Member Survivor Benefits; Public Colleges & Universities

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OPPOSE - Another bundled amendment affecting two diverse issues: payment of death benefits and waiver of educational expenses to families of first responders (including EMT and paramedics) and military personnel; and a supermajority vote requirement for increase of student fees. The major concern here is the requirement of a supermajority for raising of student fees, even if legislatively authorized, is problematic. Basically, these measures should not be placed in the state Constitution.

#9 Prohibits Offshore Oil & Gas Drilling; Prohibits Vaping in Enclosed Indoor Spaces

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OPPOSE - Two different issues are included in this one amendment: prohibition of drilling off Florida's coast and excluding vaping in indoor workplaces. While we all can support banning offshore drilling, this amendment only codifies the weak standard already in statute. Vaping has helped many to quit smoking tobacco and rights to limit vaping in indoor work spaces is already within the purview of the employer.



YES

NO

#10 State and Local Government Structure and Operation

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OPPOSE - Provides a constitutionally mandated Dept. of Veterans Affairs; ensures elections of sheriffs, property appraisers, supervisors of elections, tax collectors and clerks of court in all counties, despite county charters; and revises the dates for Legislative Session in even-numbered years. Most of these measures are redundant in that they already exist; however, it does weaken local control in favor of state interests.

#11 Property Rights; Removal of Obsolete Provision; Criminal Statutes

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OPPOSE - Another bundled measure, this mainly cleans up obsolete or discriminatory language: repeals ban on aliens owning property, and deletes provision that amendment of a criminal statute will not affect prosecution or penalties for a crime committed before the amendment. Overall, this is not egregious but does not belong in the state constitution.

#12 Lobbying and Abuse of Office by Public Officers

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OPPOSE - Expands current restrictions on lobbying for compensation by former public officials and prohibits abuse of a public position for personal gain. Overall, this is not egregious but does not belong in the state constitution.

#13 Dog Racing

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OPPOSE - Bans dog racing and gambling on dog racing. With nearly all the dog-racing tracks in Florida, this measure would result in a loss of roughly \$1 million in state revenue. Rather than a constitutional amendment, efforts should be made to better monitor the sport.

FINAL NOTE

The two most dangerous proposals are Amendment #1 and Amendment #5 which will severely limit revenue necessary for the optimum operation of government services. Several of the remaining proposals contain numerous provisions--while a voter perhaps feels supportive of one or two of the individual measures, there is another aspect that should/could not be supported. Additionally, consider whether a proposal is significant and if it rises to the level where it should be placed in the Constitution of the State of Florida.