

2018 FLORIDA CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Below are summaries of each amendment provided by the League of Women Voters of Florida, and the positions the LWV state board has taken on them.

For amendment updates and in-depth analysis please visit their website:

<https://www.lwvfl.org/amendment>

“SUPPORT” on #3, #4, #9, #13

”OPPOSE” on #1, #2, #5, #6, #7, #10

No Position on #11, #12

Amendment 1: Grants an additional \$25,000 homestead exemption for homes worth \$125,000 or more.

OPPOSE: The League has a position that “no tax sources or revenue should be specified, limited, exempted, or prohibited in the Constitution.”

Amendment 2: Makes permanent what currently is a temporary cap of 10% on annual property value increases for vacation homes, apartments and commercial property, effectively limiting increases on tax bills.

OPPOSE: The League has a position that “no tax sources or revenue should be specified, limited, exempted, or prohibited in the Constitution”.

Amendment 3: Requires approval of any new casino gambling through a citizen-initiative constitutional amendment, effectively barring the Legislature from making those gambling decisions by passing laws.

SUPPORT: It restricts casino gambling and allows Florida voters to make any decisions regarding increases of casino gambling, consistent with League position against gambling. This amendment is also supported by “No Casinos, Inc.” and Disney.

Amendment 4: Restores the voting rights of felons after they’ve completed their sentences, except for those convicted of murder or sex offenses.

SUPPORT: The League was one of the sponsors of this initiative. Florida is one of only 4 states that permanently bars felons from voting after their sentences are completed. This restriction on voting is a vestige of Florida’s post-Civil War Constitution. Everyone deserves a second chance.

Amendment 5: Requires a two-thirds vote of the Legislature to approve any new or increased taxes or fees, rather than a simple majority.

OPPOSE: This amendment does not include a provision that would allow for tax increases in times of emergencies (hurricane, floods, recession, etc.) and is an abrogation of the Legislature’s fiduciary responsibility to pass a reasonable budget.

Amendment 6: Vastly expands the scope of victims’ rights under the state Constitution; increases the mandatory retirement age for judges from 70 to 75; forces courts and judges to interpret laws and rules for themselves rather than rely on interpretations by government agencies.

OPPOSE: Victims’ rights are already protected in the Constitution, and this amendment would eliminate an existing provision that victims’ rights do not interfere with the constitutional rights of the accused.

Amendment 7: Creates a supermajority requirement for universities to impose new or increase existing student fees; enshrines in the Constitution guidelines for the State College System; mandates that employers or the state pay a death benefit to first responders and members of the military killed in the line of duty.

OPPOSE: We oppose a supermajority vote to increase fees or taxes. Family members of the military who die in line of service are already compensated through the federal government.

Amendment 8: This amendment was taken off the ballot by the Fl. Supreme Court on 9/7

Amendment 9: Prohibits oil drilling beneath waters controlled by Florida; prohibits the use of e-cigarettes, also known as vaping, at indoor workplaces.

SUPPORT: Our concern for the environment overrides our concern about putting vaping in the Constitution. We also believe that if this amendment doesn't pass, it sends a signal to the federal government that Florida does not care about off-shore drilling.

Amendment 10: Requires the Legislature to hold its session in early January on even-numbered years; creates an Office of Domestic Security and Counterterrorism within the Florida Department of Law Enforcement; mandates the existence of a state Department of Veterans' Affairs; forces all counties to elect a sheriff, tax collector, property appraiser, supervisor of elections and Clerk of Circuit Court.

OPPOSE: This limits the voters in local communities from deciding on the election of county officers. It adds an unnecessary provision as the Constitution already has the power to set dates during even numbered years. FDLE is already the lead agency in coordinating efforts to prevent terrorism, and the Constitution already has authorized the Legislature to create a Department of Veteran Affairs. This amendment is clearly an effort to restrict the powers of local government.

Amendment 11: Repeals the state's ability to prohibit non-citizens from buying, owning and selling property; deletes a provision that forces the state to prosecute criminal suspects under the law they were originally charged under, even if the Legislature changes that law; deletes obsolete language having to do with high-speed rail in Florida.

NO POSITION: Although we think that removing obsolete language is a good thing, there is a lot of other obsolete language that is not being addressed. Although the first issue regarding the ability of non-citizens to purchase and sell property cannot be enforced, the provision that requires criminal suspects to be prosecuted for an obsolete law should be changed.

Amendment 12: Expands ethics rules for elected officials and government employees, notably by expanding from two to six years the time that many officials would have to wait before they could lobby state government.

NO POSITION: Although there is need for lobbying reform, we felt that six years might be onerous, and this amendment does not address the real issue regarding lobbying, which is the impact of money in political campaigns.

Amendment 13: Bans wagering on any type of dog racing, notably greyhounds, as of December 31, 2020, while continuing to allow dog tracks to continue offering other types of gambling, including poker rooms.

SUPPORT: This is primarily a gambling issue, and the League has held a consistent position against gambling.