

# 2020 NONPARTISAN VOTER GUIDE



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BY PATTI BRIGHAM, LEAGUE PRESIDENT

*2020 has been an unusual election year*

as we continue to work under the global pandemic of COVID-19.

However, the League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVFL) is continuing to educate Florida's voters in advance of the November 3rd election.

The LWVFL is a non-partisan organization and does not endorse political candidates or parties but we do take positions on policy issues such as election reform, health care, and education.

These and other issues are reflected in the questions we have posed to the candidates this year to inform voters on their positions. The 2020 ballot will also contain a slate of constitutional amendments, which is why the League's positions are reflected in the amendment summaries in this Voter Guide.

For example, the League does not believe that tax and spending issues belong in the Constitution. Those are decisions the Legislature should make. The Constitution should not be burdened with a litany of amendments that often are driven by politics rather than

governance. However, ensuring citizens have direct access to making change when politicians fail to act is critical for our voters and explains our opposition to this election cycle's Amendment Number Four.

The League does not take lightly the responsibility of supporting or opposing constitutional amendments. Nor should voters. These are complex issues, often complicated by confusing ballot language. As a result, we encourage you to read this guide and carefully consider our summary of the amendments, what passage of them would mean and what would happen if they are voted down. We strongly believe that an informed voter is a responsible voter. The LWVFL urges you to use this guide and other sources of information to prepare to be an informed voter on or before November 3rd.



# 2020 Florida Constitutional Ballot Amendments

## Amendment 1

Citizen Requirement to Vote in Florida Elections

Originated by Citizen Initiative | Sponsor: Florida Citizen Voters

**Brief summary:** Replaces one word of the Florida Constitution. Current wording states that “every” citizen of the United States... shall be qualified to vote. This amendment proposes substituting “every” with “only a”.... This change would have no functional or financial impact on the state.

### A YES VOTE ON AMENDMENT 1 WOULD:

Replace one word (...“every” to “only a” citizen...) of the existing constitutional provision emphasizing citizenship as a requirement for voting creating no change from existing voting regulations and procedures, because the Florida Constitution currently precludes non-citizens from voting



### A NO VOTE ON AMENDMENT 1 WOULD:

Leave constitutional wording as is, stating: “Every citizen of the United States who is at least eighteen years of age and who is a permanent resident of the state, if registered as provided by law...” can vote



### SUPPORTERS

Citizen Voters, Inc.

### OPPONENTS

The League of Women Voters of Florida

## Amendment 2

Raising Florida’s Minimum Wage

Originated by Citizen Initiative | Sponsor: Florida for a Fair Wage

**Brief summary:** Establishes incremental increases to Florida’s minimum-wage starting on Sept. 30, 2021, raising minimum wage from \$8.56/hr to \$10/hr. Wages would then increase annually by \$1/hr on Sept. 30 until reaching \$15/hr by 2026. Later increases would be pegged to the annual rate of inflation.

### A YES VOTE ON AMENDMENT 2 WOULD:

- Allow minimum wage workers in Florida to earn enough to afford basic household necessities including housing, food, transportation, child care and health care.
- Help to reduce race and gender income inequality
- Potentially increase economic activity by increasing household spending
- Require small and large business owners to budget for increased payroll expenses
- Have little or no detrimental effect on job growth partly due to higher demand for goods and services generated by higher wage earners, and lower employer costs from less employee turnover, according to recent studies



### A NO VOTE ON AMENDMENT 2 WOULD:

- Allow businesses to keep labor costs at current levels
- Avoid potential labor cost impacts on the prices of consumer goods
- Maintain low-paying positions for teenagers and young adults joining the labor market
- Likely continue a wage structure that can lead to poverty among younger workers, women and minorities



### SUPPORTERS

- Florida for a Fair Wage, (Sponsor)
- Organize Florida
- AFL-CIO
- The League of Women Voters of Florida

### OPPONENTS

- The Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association
- Florida Chamber of Commerce

## How amendments get on the ballot

Note: Need 60% of the vote for an amendment to pass

**1. A joint resolution of the Florida Legislature:** This is only authorized method by which the legislature may propose amendments to the State Constitution, it must pass each house by a three-fifths vote of the membership. A joint resolution is also used for redistricting.

**2. A citizens’ initiative:** This process requires a specific number of petitions signed by registered Florida voters before the proposed amendment can appear on the ballot. Per the Florida Constitution, the number of signatures needed is based on eight percent of the voters who cast ballots in the last presidential election. In addition, the signatures must also come from voters in at least one-half of the congressional districts of the state.

**3. A proposal from the Constitution Revision Commission (CRC):** The CRC convenes once every 20 years to examine the Florida Constitution and propose changes. The CRC has authority to propose to voters a revision of all or any part of the Florida Constitution.

**4. A proposal from the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission:** The 22- appointed-member commission convenes once every 20 years (alternate 10 year intervals from the CRC) to examine the state’s budgetary and expenditure processes and revenue needs.

**5. By Constitutional Convention:** A state constitutional convention is a gathering of elected delegates who propose revisions and amendments to a state constitution. In Florida, there have been six conventions since 1838. It is a very rare occurrence.



# 2020 Florida Constitutional Ballot Amendments

## Amendment 3

All Voters Vote In Primary Elections  
for State Legislature, Governor and Cabinet

*Originated by Citizen Initiative | Sponsor: All Voters Vote, Inc.*

**Brief summary:** Replaces closed primary partisan elections - for Governor, State Cabinet and Legislature - with a single primary in which all voters could vote, regardless of party affiliation, and all candidates would run on a single nonpartisan primary ballot, regardless of their party affiliation. The top two vote getters would move on to the general election. Congressional and presidential races would not be affected.

### A YES VOTE ON AMENDMENT 3 WOULD:

- Help increase voter participation by allowing 3.4 million (of Florida's 13.7 million) registered voters not affiliated with a major political party to vote in primary elections
- Potentially lead to fewer minority candidates being elected to serve and represent their constituents in the Florida Legislature
- Potentially result in two candidates of the same political party running against one another in the same race in the General Election
- Potentially produce more competitive state races, and attract more moderate candidates to run for state offices
- Require third-party candidates to compete at the primary level to secure a spot on the general election ballot



### A NO VOTE ON AMENDMENT 3 WOULD:

- Continue the current closed Primary Election process, primarily maintaining two party control over state government
- Retain voters current ability to elect candidates that more closely reflect and represent the racial makeup of their Legislative districts
- Ensure nominated candidates conform more closely and consistently with positions held by the two major political parties
- Continue to allow unqualified write-in candidates to trigger a closed primary simply by entering a race for state office in which only candidates of a single political party are running



### SUPPORTERS

- All Voters Vote (Sponsor)
- Florida Fair and Open Primaries

### OPPONENTS

- Republican Party of Florida
- Democratic Party of Florida
- Green Party of Florida
- Florida State Conference NAACP
- Florida Chamber of Commerce
- League of Women Voters of Fla.
- Organize Florida
- AFL-CIO
- People Over Profits
- Florida Conservation Voters
- Florida People's Advocacy Center

## Amendment 4

Voter Approval of Constitutional Amendments

*Originated by Citizen Initiative | Sponsor: Keep Our Constitution Clean*

**Brief summary:** Requires that all proposed amendments (and revisions) to the Florida Constitution be voted on and approved by 60% (a super majority) of voters in TWO consecutive general elections in order to pass. Currently, an amendment becomes part of the constitution if it reaches 60% approval in ONE general election.

### A YES VOTE ON AMENDMENT 4 WOULD:

- Likely lead to a marked reduction in the number of future amendments added to the constitution
- Delay enactment of voter approved changes to the Florida Constitution
- Add considerable time & money needed by citizen groups to successfully pass voter driven initiatives
- Provide well-funded corporate interests a second chance to defeat publicly popular amendments that initially pass
- Significantly limit voters' ability to amend their constitution and to act as a check on the Legislature when it fails to pass laws that are important to citizens or when it passes laws that are unfavorable



### A NO VOTE ON AMENDMENT 4 WOULD:

- Retain a less restrictive process for citizens to bypass the Legislature by amending the constitution through direct democracy
- Maintain existing pathways for citizens to amend their constitution with approval of 60% of all voters in a SINGLE General Election



### SUPPORTERS

- Keep Our Constitution Clean (Sponsor)

### OPPONENTS

- League of Women Voters of Florida
- Common Cause
- AFL-CIO
- ACLU
- Southern Poverty Law Center
- Florida Rights Restoration Coalition
- Service Employees International Union
- Organize Florida
- New Florida Majority
- Florida Immigrant Coalition
- Florida Civic Engagement Table



# 2020 Florida Constitutional Ballot Amendments

## Amendment 5

Limitation on Homestead Exemption

*Originated by: Florida Legislature*

*Sponsor: Senator Rick Roth, (R) — West Palm Beach.*

**Brief summary:** Increase from 2 years to 3 years the period of time homeowners have to transfer their Save Our Homes benefits from a prior home to a new home. The difference between a home's adjusted value and the appraised value is the Save Our Home benefit. Currently, if a person moves to a new home, they have two years to transfer this benefit to their new home.

### A YES VOTE ON AMENDMENT 5 WOULD:

- Help homeowners who sell their home late in the year by allowing more time to transfer their SOH benefit to a new home
- Reduce property tax revenue available for funding local schools and other services like police, fire and infrastructure
- Limit the ability of local governments' to control their budgets based on their county needs.
- Add tax law to the Florida Constitution making it difficult to alter in response to changing or emergency economic conditions



### A NO VOTE ON AMENDMENT 5 WOULD:

- Maintain the current Save Our Homes exemption two-year portability period which begins Jan 1 of each calendar year, effectively reducing the amount of time (to as little as one year and a few days) that late-year home sellers have to buy a new home and transfer their SOH discount
- Not impact current level of property tax revenues available for funding local schools and other services like police, fire and infrastructure
- Leave property tax law out of Florida's Constitution, more fully preserving local governments' control over county budgets and their ability to efficiently respond to current and future community needs



### SUPPORTERS

The Florida Legislature (sponsor/originator)

### OPPONENTS

The League of Women Voters of Florida

## Amendment 6

Ad Valorem Tax Discount for Spouses of Certain Deceased Veterans Who Had Permanent, Combat-Related Disabilities

*Originated: Florida Legislature*

*Sponsor: State Rep. Sam Killebrew, (R) — Winter Haven.*

**Brief summary:** Allows a homestead property tax discount to carry over to the surviving spouse of a deceased veteran with permanent combat-related disabilities. This discount would take effect January 1, 2021 and remain in effect until the spouse remarries, sells or disposes of the property except under certain conditions.

### A YES VOTE ON AMENDMENT 6 WOULD:

- Extend additional tax relief to surviving spouses of deceased veterans' who were permanently disabled by combat related injuries
- Reduce property tax revenue available for funding local schools and other services like police, fire and infrastructure
- Add tax law to the Florida Constitution making it difficult to alter in response to changing or emergency economic conditions
- Limit the ability of local governments' to control their budgets based on their county needs.



### A NO VOTE ON AMENDMENT 6 WOULD:

- Continue the policy of discontinuing additional property tax relief for surviving spouses of deceased veterans' who were permanently disabled by combat related injuries
- Not impact current level of property tax revenue available for funding local schools and other services like police, fire and infrastructure
- Leave property tax law out of Florida's Constitution, more fully preserving local governments' control over county budgets and their ability to efficiently respond to current and future community needs



### SUPPORTERS

The Florida Legislature (sponsor/originator)

### OPPONENTS

The League of Women Voters of Florida

