

# DECODE THE BALLOT – 2022 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT QUESTIONS

## AMENDMENT 1

### LIMITATION ON THE ASSESSMENT OF REAL PROPERTY USED FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES

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#### Ballot Question

*Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution, effective January 1, 2023, to authorize the Legislature, by general law, to prohibit the consideration of any change or improvement made to real property used for residential purposes to improve the property's resistance to flood damage in determining the assessed value of such property for ad valorem taxation purposes.*

#### Overview

Many home improvement projects ultimately increase the assessed value of a home, which means the homeowners pay higher property taxes. This amendment would allow the Florida Legislature to pass laws that would make improvements intended to protect homes from flood damage exempt from higher assessments. The amendment is in response to the threat to Florida homes from rising sea levels.

#### YES VOTE ON AMENDMENT 1:

Authorize the Florida Legislature to pass laws that would exempt flood resistance improvements from contributing to increases in property assessments. That means property owners wouldn't pay higher taxes because of those improvements.

Exempt flood resistance improvements such as "elevating structures, filling basements, and waterproofing," as well as improvements "to allow for stormwater runoff, waterproofing basements, installing check valves capable of preventing water backup, and elevating furnaces, heaters, and electrical panels." It would take effect Jan. 1, 2023.

#### NO VOTE ON AMENDMENT 1:

Maintain the status quo, which means homeowners' flood resistance improvements might result in higher property assessments and higher taxes.

# AMENDMENT 2

## Abolishing the Constitution Revision Commission

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### Ballot Question

*Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to abolish the Constitution Revision Commission, which meets at 20-year intervals and is scheduled to next convene in 2037, as a method of submitting proposed amendments or revisions to the State Constitution to electors of the state for approval. This amendment does not affect the ability to revise or amend the State Constitution through citizen initiative, constitutional convention, the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission, or legislative joint resolution.”*

### Overview

The Florida Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) is a 37-member commission provided for in the state constitution that reviews and proposes changes to the Florida Constitution. The CRC convenes every 20 years, each branch of the Florida State Government appoints commissioners: Governor – 15, President of the Senate – 9, Speaker of the House – 9, and Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court – 3.

This commission is unique to Florida, as the CRC brings constitutional amendments directly to the ballot for public vote.

#### **YES VOTE ON AMENDMENT 2:**

Eliminate the Constitution Revision Commission, which was created in 1968 and meets every 20 years to consider changes to the state Constitution.

Leaves four ways for a constitutional amendment to get on the ballot: through the Legislature, a citizen-led initiative, constitutional convention, or the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission.

#### **NO VOTE ON AMENDMENT 2:**

Preserve the state’s Constitution Revision Commission and its ability to present amendments to the voters every 20 years.

# AMENDMENT 3

## Additional Homestead Property Tax Exemption for Specified Critical Public Service Workforce

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### Ballot Question

*Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to authorize the Legislature, by general law, to grant an additional homestead tax exemption for non-school levies of up to \$50,000 of the assessed value of homestead property owned by classroom teachers, law enforcement officers, correctional officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, child welfare services professionals, active-duty members of the United States Armed Forces, and Florida National Guard members. This amendment shall take effect January 1, 2023."*

### Overview

This amendment would authorize the state Legislature to create a new homestead exemption of up to \$50,000 for certain public service employees, including "classroom teachers, law enforcement officers, correctional officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, child welfare services professionals, active-duty members of the United States Armed Forces, and members of the Florida National Guard."

The exemption means property owners in these professions can subtract \$50,000 from the assessed value of their property, which will reduce their local property tax bills. The exemption would be in addition to the standard \$50,000 homestead exemptions Floridians already receive on their primary residence. The new exemption would not apply to assessments for school taxes.

The Legislature has already passed a companion bill that, if the constitutional amendment is passed by 60% of Florida's voters, will create the new exemption and make it effective on Jan. 1, 2023.

### YES VOTE ON AMENDMENT 3:

Allow the Legislature to create a new homestead exemption up to \$50,000.

Exclude the exemption from assessments for school property taxes.

Cost local governments \$85.9 million in lost revenue for fiscal year 2023-24, growing to \$96 million in fiscal year 2026-27. The state would make up for the losses in Florida's 29 "fiscally constrained" counties, primarily rural counties in the Panhandle and South Florida's interior.

Trigger a companion bill that puts the new exemption into effect as of Jan. 1, 2023.



### **NO VOTE ON AMENDMENT 3:**

Reject giving lawmakers the ability to create a new homestead exemption for certain public service occupations up to \$50,000.

Have no effect on property tax revenue collected by local governments.

Render moot the bill that would have created the new homestead exemption if the amendment had passed.

# COUNTY REFERENDUM 1

## Charter Amendment Creating Local Oath of Office for County Commissioners and the County Mayor

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### Ballot Question

*Shall the County Charter be amended to require that County Commissioners and the County Mayor, upon taking office, swear or affirm that they will support, protect and defend the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Charter and the government of Miami-Dade County?*

### Overview

A home rule charter is essentially a local constitution: it sets up the government structure and outlines its authority and its limitations. Home rule provides local control. It gives the county government the ability to craft ordinances and make decisions based on local needs, rather than having to follow a one-size-fits-all state code that's decided by state legislators.

#### **YES VOTE ON COUNTY REFERENDUM 1:**

Require that County Commissioners and the County Mayor, upon taking office, swear or affirm that they will support, protect and defend the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Charter and the government of Miami-Dade County.

#### **NO VOTE ON COUNTY REFERENDUM 1:**

Leave everything status quo. Currently the Mayor and Commissioners do not swear to support, protect and defend the Home Rule Charter.

# COUNTY REFERENDUM 2

## Charter Amendment Requiring Voter Approval for Changes to Governing Structure of County Transportation Assets

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### Ballot Question

*Shall the Charter be amended to provide that acts of the Board of County Commissioners to transfer ownership or governing authority of the Miami International Airport, Port Miami or Miami-Dade Expressway Authority must be approved by a majority vote of the qualified electors in Miami-Dade County at the next available General Election?*

### Overview

This item is also about home rule charter. Specifically, the amendment would provide additional protections related to the ownership of county-owned and operated airport, seaport, and other transportation functions like the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX) that lie wholly within Miami-Dade County. This proposal is in response to the State's attempt to abolish MDX for the state-run Greater Miami Expressway Authority (GMX).

### **YES VOTE ON COUNTY REFERENDUM 2:**

The Charter would be amended to provide that acts of the Board of County commissioners to transfer ownership or governing authority of the Miami International Airport, Port Miami or Miami-Dade Expressway Authority must be approved by a majority vote of the qualified electors in Miami-Dade County at the next available General Election.

### **NO VOTE ON COUNTY REFERENDUM 2:**

Maintain status quo, which could leave transportation assets in Miami-Dade County vulnerable to state control.

# SCHOOL BOARD REFERENDUM 1

## Referendum to Approve Ad Valorem Levy for Teachers, Instructional Personnel, Student Safety and Security

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### Ballot Question

*Shall the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, levy one (1) mill of ad valorem taxes for school operational purposes to continue improving compensation for teachers and instructional personnel and to improve student safety and security for public schools, including charter schools, with oversight by a Citizen Advisory Committee, beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027?*

### Overview

In 2018, voters approved a .75 mill tax increase for ad valorem (real estate) taxes to increase teacher pay for Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Currently, teachers receive supplements up to 28.97% from the referendum funds. It is set to expire unless voters pass this referendum.

All public schools, both Miami-Dade County Public Schools and charter schools, will share the revenue, proportionate to the school's student enrollment. By state statute, all referendums moving forward must include charter schools.

"Millage," or "mill rate," is a term localities use to calculate property tax liability. Property tax itself is sometimes referred to as "millage tax." A mill is one one-thousandth of a dollar, and in property tax terms is equal to \$1.00 of tax for each \$1,000 of assessment.

### **YES VOTE ON SCHOOL BOARD REFERENDUM:**

Approve a tax increase from .75 mill to 1 mill on real estate taxes to raise teacher pay and improve school safety and security for public and charter schools beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027.

### **NO VOTE ON SCHOOL BOARD REFERENDUM:**

The current real estate tax increase that voters approved in 2018 would expire. If the renewal does not pass, teachers' and instructional personnel salaries could be cut. The school district would have to reallocate funding to provide police protection at every school.

