

Understanding the November Property Tax Amendment

THE CUTS YOU WON'T SEE ON THE BALLOT

- The constitutional amendment on the November 2026 ballot is officially titled “Increased Homestead Exemption; Lower Cap on Increases in Non-homestead Property Assessments”
- The amendment cuts the largest source of funding for critical local services and provides no replacement revenue.
- Counties remain legally required to deliver the same services to the same residents.

The math leaves two options:

- ☐ Deep cuts to critical services (or)
- ☐ Higher taxes and fees.

In most places, both.

WHAT THE AMENDMENT DOES

Raises the homestead exemption to \$150,000 in 2027 and \$250,000 in 2028. A future Legislature is directed to increase the exemption or phase out the rest on a schedule it sets later.

Reduces the assessment cap on non-homestead property from 10 percent to 5 percent.

The amendment includes a five-year waiting period before new Florida residents qualify for the expanded exemption.

Anyone who had not established permanent Florida residency as of December 31, 2026 is limited to the existing \$50,000 exemption for five years, regardless of when they purchase a home.

For example, a military family relocating to Florida in 2027 must wait five years before receiving the benefit.

Provides no funding mechanism to replace lost revenue, most of which flows to public safety and critical infrastructure. While the funding to deliver these services is strangled, counties remain legally obligated to provide them.

THE MATH DOESN'T ADD UP

\$2.94 BILLION

Estimated Annual revenue loss for county governments in year one.

(Source: FAC Reader Guide)

\$5.05 BILLION

Estimated annual revenue loss by year two.

(Source: FAC Reader Guide)

85%

Florida counties already spend the equivalent of 85 cents of every property tax dollar on public safety.

55 out of 67

Number of Florida counties where public safety is the single largest budget item.

(FAC August 2025, FY2024 data)

The amendment collapses the tax base. Counties can raise millage rates in response, but on a dramatically smaller base. Rate increases alone cannot close an \$8.4 billion hole—the math simply does not add up.

That means an \$8.4 billion cut in year two cannot be absorbed without reducing what counties spend on public safety and other critical services.



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A Tax Shift, Not a Tax Cut



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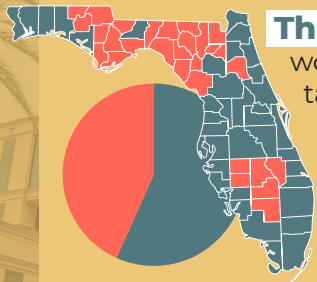


This amendment removes the largest source of local revenue but does not reduce the cost of the services Floridians depend on.

In some places, that means cuts to core services. In others, higher taxes and fees. In most places, both. When counties run out of options, the pressure shifts to Tallahassee for a sales tax hike, or other sources of funding.

LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY, GONE

29 Florida counties are already so fiscally constrained that a cut of this size leaves them with no options. To keep deputies on patrol and ambulances on the road, they will be forced to seek massive subsidies from Tallahassee every year.



The other 38 counties

won't escape either. Their taxpayers will ultimately absorb the difference through higher fees, higher rates on businesses and rental properties, and higher costs passed through to renters and consumers.

Right now, the officials who decide how much to tax and spend can be thrown out of office. This amendment changes that. The bills don't go away. They just get sent by politicians in a distant capital. That's not tax relief. It's just less accountability.

THE SERVICES WON'T DISAPPEAR, BUT THEY WILL GET RATIONED

The authors of this amendment say public safety is protected. It is not. Counties facing billions in cuts cannot maintain current public safety budgets, let alone grow them. New deputies don't get hired. Equipment ages past replacement. Response times slow.

Constitutional officers like sheriffs, tax collectors, property appraisers, supervisors of elections and clerks of court compete for a shrinking share of remaining dollars. None of them can stop doing the work the state requires them to do, but none will have the resources to do it well.

Hurricane response, drainage, clean water and roads become the first places counties must look for room. The services that aren't constitutionally named are the easiest to defer.

WHO PAYS UNDER A TAX SHIFT



Floridians with homes above the \$250,000 threshold absorb a larger share of the local tax burden as millage rates rise to cover the gap.



Floridians below the threshold save one line on one bill. Everything else is likely to rise: sales taxes, fees, the prices non-homesteaded small businesses charge, and the rents non-homesteaded landlords pass through.



Small businesses shoulder a larger share of the overall tax bill and are likely to pay more in commercial property taxes, fees and rent. Those costs ultimately affect customers at the cash register.



Renters don't receive the homestead benefit at all. They live in non-homesteaded properties whose taxes climb. Their rent climbs with it.



Military families ordered to a Florida installation in 2027 get no benefit from the expanded exemption for five years, even as the communities surrounding their base may raise impact fees and other charges to offset lost property tax revenue. They serve here. They pay taxes here. They just don't qualify here.



Floridians who lose their homes in a hurricane and are forced to temporarily relocate out of state while rebuilding may find themselves on the wrong side of the December 31, 2026 residency cutoff, facing a five-year wait before qualifying for the full exemption on their rebuilt home.



Young Floridians who leave for college or work and move back to buy their first home are treated the same as someone who has never set foot in the state.



Every Floridian picks up the rest through higher taxes and fees. The Tax Foundation has put the rate required to replace property taxes statewide at 15.34 percent, and as high as 32.5 percent in some rural counties. (Jared Walczak, October 2025)



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