

AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION – FOR THE WORSE?

League of Women Voters Florida, coalition partners highlight worst of the worst proposed amendments before the CRC

TALLAHASSEE, FLA. — The League of Women Voters Florida (LWVFL) joined with allied organizations in Tallahassee to alert Floridians to a host of bad ideas that could be on the ballot when they go to the polls this fall.

There are a handful of good proposals still alive before the Constitution Revision Commission (CRC), but they are overshadowed by numerous proposals seeking to strip away constitutional protections,” said **Pamela Goodman**, President of the League of Women Voters of Florida. “As commissioners travel the state for a second round of public hearings, Floridians need to make their voices heard in opposition to these harmful proposals.”

The CRC is convened once every 20 years to conduct a thorough review and propose amendments to the Florida Constitution. The amendments that the commission approves will go directly on the ballot next November for voters to decide.

“The League of Women Voters has not submitted or endorsed any proposals. We’ve joined with a broad coalition of organizations working to promote transparency and hold the commission accountable to the citizens of Florida,” Goodman explained. “The commission’s failure to adopt rules in a timely manner and a continuing tendency to ignore their own rules of procedure are a serious concern. But even more concerning at this point is a very clear agenda unfolding for the CRC that mirrors the legislature.”

Flanked by representatives of coalition partner organizations including American Civil Liberties Union Florida, Anti-Defamation League, Common Cause Florida, Florida Policy Institute, Florida Education Association, SEIU Florida, Florida Alliance of Planned Parenthood Affiliates, Progress Florida, Florida NOW, For Our Future, Florida PTA, Florida AFL-CIO, Sierra Club, Southern Poverty Law Center, Florida Public Defender Association, Equality Florida and Florida First Amendment Foundation during a press conference on the capitol steps, Goodman questioned whether the appointed commission was acting independently or under the control of their appointing authorities.

“With so many bills mirroring CRC proposals moving through the legislature, it begs the question of who is really in control,” Goodman said.

Coalition partners highlighted what they consider to be the “worst of the worst” proposals under consideration by the CRC. Most of the measures making the

“Terrible Ten” list have the common goal of restricting or eliminating protections currently provided by the Florida Constitution.

“We are calling upon the members of the CRC to use the public tour that launched yesterday to really listen and act on what Floridians want in their constitution,” Goodman urged. “If they don’t, Florida voters will have no trouble saying NO in November.”

“Worst of the Worst” Proposed Amendments

If the ballot summaries of the proposals making our list of the “Terrible 10” were to give an accurate description of the proposed changes – here’s what Floridians would be asked to do:

Proposal 4 – Delete the No Aid provision from the Florida Constitution’s “Religious Freedom” protections and open the door to Floridians’ tax dollars potentially funding religious indoctrination, proselytizing, and discrimination

Proposal 22 – Eliminate all existing privacy protections, including reproductive rights, from Florida’s Constitution except for those specifically relating to informational privacy. It does this by narrowing the privacy clause so that it only applies “with respect to privacy of information and the disclosure thereof.”

Proposal 29 – Require mandatory use of the error-prone E-Verify program, potentially denying thousands of authorized immigrant and even citizen workers the ability to work without any meaningful avenue to seek redress.

Proposal 43 –Mandate term limits for local school board members rather than letting voters in the school districts decide how long a member can serve their community.

Proposal 45 – Give tax dollars to private schools through school vouchers including religious schools - creating a system of publicly funded education separate from our free public schools

Proposal 71 – Take sole control of charter schools away from local school boards and allow decisions about local education needs to be made at the state level.

Proposal 72 – Tie the hands of future elected leaders and severely limit Florida’s ability to invest in public education, mental health care, affordable

housing, roads and bridges, parks, beaches and workforce training programs by requiring a supermajority vote of the Legislature to raise taxes or fees.

Proposal 95 – Allow the state to preempt any local ordinances that big business can claim interferes with commerce between counties and other jurisdictions – such as living wage ordinances, protections from wage theft, local hiring preferences or local protections for the environment and natural resources.

Proposal 96 – Needlessly claiming to protect victims of crime while not providing any meaningful benefit to victims, interfering with the rights of the accused, and making it more difficult for the state to convict criminals.

Proposal 97 – Make it close to impossible for the constitution to be changed by initiative, by the Legislature or by any commission in the future.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.