Amendment 3: Homestead Exemption and Assessment Cap Changes

By Sandy Parker | Sparker's Soapbox | Published 2026-08-20

Florida voters will decide the fate of Amendment 3 this November, a legislatively referred amendment that would raise the homestead exemption for non-school property taxes from $50,000 to $150,000 in 2027, $250,000 in 2028, with the amount indexed to inflation thereafter; let local governments choose to raise that exemption even further on their own; lower the yearly assessment cap on other property, such as businesses and second homes, from 10% to 5%; and limit what counties and cities can spend property tax money on to a defined list of core services. A homestead exemption allows homeowners who use a property as their primary residence to exempt a portion of its assessed value from property taxes, reducing the amount they owe. Every registered Florida voter can cast a vote, and the measure needs support from at least 60% of voters to pass.

Research for this post was compiled by Claude (Anthropic AI), drawing on internet-accessible public sources. All information was reviewed and verified by the author.

The Amendment

Below is the summary as it will appear on the ballot:

> **INCREASED HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION; LOWER CAP ON INCREASES IN NON-HOMESTEAD PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS**
> This amendment increases the homestead exemption, for all non-school taxes, to $150,000 in 2027 and to $250,000 in 2028, and adjusts for inflation thereafter. It requires the Legislature to prescribe a uniform procedure for counties and municipalities, for their respective levies, to increase the homestead exemption up to full assessed value, and allows special districts, subject to referendum approval, to do the same. Persons who are not Florida residents on December 31, 2026, will receive the existing homestead exemption upon qualifying for a homestead exemption, with the increased homestead exemption beginning with the fifth year of exemption, to the extent permitted by the U.S. Constitution. This amendment reduces the annual cap on assessment increases for non-homestead properties from 10% to 5%. This amendment requires counties and municipalities to use property taxes solely for public safety, education and schools, infrastructure, natural resources, bond debt service, retirement benefits for employees, and operations and administration. Other expenditures may be approved by county officers or county or municipal governing bodies unless prohibited by general law,

notwithstanding Article VII, Section 9(a) of the Florida Constitution, which allows counties and municipalities to levy property taxes for their respective purposes. This amendment takes effect January 1, 2027. (FL Division of Elections)

Background: How This Got on the Ballot

Amendment 3 began as a proposal from Gov. Ron DeSantis, who called a special legislative session for the week of June 1, 2026, to consider broad property tax relief. Announcing the plan in Tampa on May 27, 2026, DeSantis said: “Property tax revenue collected by local governments has nearly doubled in the past seven years and is expected to reach an astounding $83 billion by 2032. Florida homeowners need relief. Now is the time to stand up for taxpayers, enact a historic reform, and save the home of every Floridian.” (Executive Office of the Governor)

Amendment 3 reached the ballot through a legislatively-referred amendment (aka legislative joint resolution), which is how state lawmakers propose changes to the constitution. Passing one takes a three-fifths vote in both the House and Senate, and the governor doesn’t need to sign it. During the special session, the House substantially rewrote the governor’s original proposal, and both chambers passed the rewritten version on June 2, 2026 (75-27 House, with 16 not voting; 30-8 Senate, with 2 not voting).
Collier County’s state legislative delegation, Sen. Kathleen Passidomo and Reps. Adam Botana, Lauren Melo, and Yvette Benarroch, all voted yes. The final version differed enough from the governor’s original pitch that DeSantis said in June: “I don’t think you’re going to see me leading that on this particular proposal, because while I support it, I do think it’s not all that I was hoping to see.” (Florida House of Representatives; Florida Senate; WPTV)

The ballot title and summary above are a court-ordered rewrite. Former state Sen. Jeff Brandes and other plaintiffs sued Attorney General James Uthmeier and Secretary of State Cord Byrd, arguing the original language was written to sell the amendment rather than describe it. Leon County Circuit Judge David Frank agreed on Aug. 4, 2026, ruling that the original title, “Save Our Homes From Excessive Property Taxes,” was “akin to a political slogan” and that “the proposed ballot title does not state the basic legal purpose of the amendment; it endorses it.” The state did not appeal, and the Florida Department of State has since published the language quoted above. (Florida Phoenix)

What This Would Do

This amendment, if approved, would do several things (Florida Division of Elections; Florida Senate Bill Summary):

- **Raise the homestead exemption for non-school property taxes** on a homesteaded property's taxable value, from the current $50,000 to $150,000 starting Jan. 1, 2027, then to $250,000 starting Jan. 1, 2028, adjusted for inflation starting in 2029. People who aren't Florida residents as of Dec. 31, 2026, would phase in more slowly, starting with the current $50,000 exemption when they first qualify for a homestead exemption and reaching the full increased exemption in their fifth year, "to the extent permitted by the U.S. Constitution," a caveat acknowledging this slower phase-in could itself face a federal legal challenge
- **Require the Legislature to set a uniform procedure** letting counties and municipalities voluntarily raise the homestead exemption further, up to a home's full assessed value, for the taxes they levy themselves; special districts could do the same, but only if their own voters approve it in a referendum
- **Lower the annual assessment-increase cap on non-homestead property**, such as businesses, rental property, and second homes, from 10% to 5% for county, municipal, and special-district levies (school levies aren't affected)
- **Limit what counties and municipalities can spend property tax revenue on** to a defined list of "core" purposes: public safety, education and schools, infrastructure, natural resources, bond debt service, retirement benefits for local employees, and operations and administration. Local governments could still approve other spending unless a state law prohibits it, notwithstanding a Florida Constitution provision (Article VII, Section 9(a)) that otherwise lets them levy property taxes for their own purposes

The Florida League of Women Voters describes Amendment 3 as a "**Balancing Act**" (vote411 Election Guide):

Permanent residents with homestead property will receive significant property tax relief due to a permanent increase in the homestead property exemption amount. By January 1, 2028, a home valued at $250,000 or less will pay no property taxes, except for those taxes levied by school districts. Owners of non-homesteaded property will also receive a property tax break because the amount their property assessment can increase each year is reduced from 10% to 5%, which reduces their property taxes.

However, this means that local governments, county and municipalities, will receive significantly less revenue to fund government services that these same residents use. Since this amendment also dictates how property taxes are spent by counties and municipalities, local governments are further constrained in how they manage their budgets.

Fiscal Impact

Amendment 3 is a legislative joint resolution, not a citizen initiative, so it wasn't reviewed by the state's Financial Impact Estimating Conference. Instead, the Legislature's own Revenue Estimating Conference produced the fiscal note included in the House's final bill analysis. It said local non-school property tax revenues would fall an estimated $4.95 billion in Fiscal Year 2027-28 (once the $150,000 exemption takes effect) and $8.78 billion in FY 2028-29 (once the $250,000 exemption takes effect), reaching a recurring annual impact of about $11.86 billion. The analysis found the fiscal impact on state government itself to be "indeterminate at this time but likely insignificant." (Florida House of Representatives Final Bill Analysis)

For Collier County specifically, the Revenue Estimating Conference projects Collier County government's own non-school property tax revenue would fall by $47.7 million in FY 2027-28, growing to $134.2 million by FY 2031-32; Collier's independent special districts combined would lose $22.6 million in FY 2027-28, growing to $60.4 million by FY 2031-32. Among Collier's municipalities, Naples would lose $1.4 million in FY 2027-28, growing to $5.0 million by FY 2031-32; Marco Island would lose $1.1 million in FY 2027-28, growing to $3.4 million by FY 2031-32; and Everglades City would lose $76,386 in FY 2027-28, growing to $212,558 by FY 2031-32. (Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research)

Property taxes are a core source of day-to-day operating revenue for Florida's local governments, and the largest single source for Collier County and its municipalities, which is part of why the projected losses matter.

Arguments in Favor

Gov. DeSantis has framed Amendment 3 as relief from property tax bills that have grown faster than incomes. In a later interview, he said of the final legislative version: "What they did is good for taxpayers. I'm going to vote for it. I think it's positive, in terms of getting affordability and relief from persistent high prices across the economy." (FOX 13 Tampa Bay)

The Legislature's own bill summary describes the amendment as providing "property tax relief to owners of real property in Florida." (Florida Senate Bill Summary)

As of early August 2026, no statewide "Yes on 3" campaign comparable to the organized opposition described below had publicly formed; the public case for the amendment has come mainly from Gov. DeSantis and the legislative sponsors who carried it through the special session. U.S. Sen. Rick Scott, who initially voiced skepticism, later announced he would vote for the amendment. (WPTV)

Arguments Against

Opposition has come from local governments, public-safety groups, policy researchers, and both major political parties, and it has grown faster than any organized effort to support the amendment.

It's a tax shift, not a tax cut. The Florida League of Cities argues that when property tax revenue drops, spending on public safety, stormwater systems, and road repairs doesn't disappear, it shifts onto renters, businesses, and other taxpayers. (Florida League of Cities) The nonpartisan Florida Policy Institute similarly argues the amendment would produce "a monumental cost shift" and that "presenting this as a 'savings' for Floridians fundamentally misrepresents the true consequences of this amendment." (Florida Phoenix) And the Collier County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller points out that "If property tax revenues decline substantially, local governments may ultimately have to consider identifying alternative revenue sources, reducing services, or implementing a combination of both." (Collier County Clerk)

Public safety and other essential services could see real cuts. The Florida Sheriffs Association has said it is "significantly concerned" about the proposal, and the Florida State Fraternal Order of Police, Florida Professional Firefighters, and Florida Fire Chiefs Association have all formally opposed it. Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd, "one of Florida's highest-profile conservative sheriffs," called the amendment "a train wreck" and "the most ludicrous piece of unresearched stuff I've seen." (WPTV) In Jacksonville, Fraternal Order of Police president Randy Reaves said: "Our concerns are that big of a budget cut for us here. We do believe that that could directly affect public safety and the work that our men and women do on a daily basis." (News4JAX)

Renters get no protection, and could end up paying more. The amendment offers nothing to Florida's roughly 3 million renter households, including an estimated 905,000 low-income renters who already spend more than 40% of their income on housing, and research on rental housing suggests landlords sometimes pass part of the property tax burden on to tenants regardless of who's formally billed. The Florida Policy Institute has raised this as a fairness concern. (Florida Policy Institute)

New residents, second homeowners, and others could also pay more. The Tax Foundation reaches a similar conclusion from a different angle: if local governments raise millage rates to recoup lost revenue, that would mean higher property taxes "on the many properties that do not qualify for the substantially higher exemption, including the properties of new Florida residents and second homeowners, commercial properties (including apartment complexes), and industrial and agricultural properties," a shift the group says would make Florida's tax code "far less stable and competitive." (Tax Foundation)

The path to expanding the exemption further is open-ended. Beyond the initial increase to $250,000, the amendment leaves it to a future Legislature to decide when and how counties and municipalities can raise the homestead exemption further, up to a home's full value. The Florida Policy

Institute has flagged this as a fairness and accountability concern: once the Legislature sets that "uniform procedure," local governments could keep raising the exemption toward full elimination of non-school homestead property taxes without asking voters to approve each additional step. (Florida Policy Institute)

Political opposition includes some Republicans, though it's mostly organized on the left. Reps. Nathan Boyles and Patt Maney were the only two House Republicans to vote no, with Maney citing insufficient fiscal analysis of how local governments would replace lost revenue and objecting to the original ballot language's "excessive" framing as a political judgment. (Mid Bay News) Most organized opposition, though, has come from Democrats: the No on 3 campaign, Save our Services No on Amendment 3, has endorsements from 31 Democratic state lawmakers, including House Democratic Leader Fentrice Driskell and Senate Democratic Leader Lori Berman, and the Florida Democratic Party has formally opposed the amendment. (Florida Phoenix; WPTV)

What a "Yes" Vote Means / What a "No" Vote Means

A "yes" vote raises the non-school homestead exemption to $150,000 in 2027 and $250,000 in 2028, after which it adjusts for inflation, directs the Legislature to let counties and municipalities raise it further on their own levies (with special districts needing voter approval to do the same), lowers the assessment-increase cap on non-homestead property from 10% to 5%, and limits how counties and municipalities may spend property tax revenue, all starting Jan. 1, 2027.

A "no" vote leaves Florida's current property tax exemptions, assessment caps, and local spending rules unchanged.

Learn More

- Florida Division of Elections: Amendment 3 summary page
- CS/HJR 1F bill history (Florida Senate)
- Ballotpedia: Florida Amendment 3, Homestead Tax Exemptions, Property Assessments, and Spending Restrictions Amendment (2026)
- League of Women Voters of Florida: Vote411 voter guide
- Property Tax Relief or Property Tax Shift? (Collier County Clerk, 7/26)
- The Effect of Property Taxes On Collier County (Collier County Clerk, 8/26)
- Amendment 3 ballot title, summary language, don't pass muster, judge rules. (Florida Phoenix, 8/4/26)
- Growing concerns over Amendment 3 as more groups speak out against the property tax proposal. (News4Jax, 8/5/26

- Unintended consequences of Florida’s proposed Amendment 3 | Opinion. (The News-Press, 8/15/26)