Amendment 3: Homestead Exemption and Assessment Cap Changes

By Sandy Parker | Sparker's Soapbox | Published 2026-08-20; Updated 2026-09-06

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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 and $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
- change the rules governing what counties and cities may spend property tax revenue on, specifying a list of permitted purposes while allowing other expenditures unless prohibited by state law.

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 (75-26 House; 30-9 Senate). 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 initially said he wouldn’t campaign for it, but he has recently expressed support. (Florida House of Representatives; Florida Senate; WPTV; The Floridian)

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.*
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> *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)

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.

The Revenue Estimating Conference projects Collier County government's 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)

Arguments in Favor

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)

Gov. DeSantis has framed Amendment 3 as relief from property tax bills that have grown faster than incomes. Of the final legislative version, he said: "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)

As of early September 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)

Florida TaxWatch's statewide tracker currently lists Florida Realtors as the only statewide organization it has identified as supporting the amendment, versus 12 organizations opposed or expressing significant concerns. (Florida Realtors; Florida TaxWatch)

Arguments Against

Opponents argue the amendment could shift taxes rather than simply reduce them. Because the amendment would reduce the taxable value of homesteaded property, local governments could respond by raising millage rates on the remaining tax base, reducing services, finding other sources of revenue, or some combination of the three. The Florida League of Cities and Florida Policy Institute argue that some of the benefit to homestead owners could therefore be shifted to other taxpayers. The Collier County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller similarly notes that substantially lower property-tax revenue could require local governments to consider alternative revenue sources or service reductions. (Florida League of Cities; Florida Policy Institute; Collier County Clerk)

Opponents warn that public safety and other essential services could face cuts. Local governments rely heavily on property taxes to fund police and fire protection, emergency services, roads, stormwater systems and other services. The Florida Sheriffs Association has expressed significant concern about the proposal, while the Florida State Fraternal Order of Police, Florida Professional Firefighters and Florida Fire Chiefs Association have opposed it. Public-safety officials have warned that revenue losses of the magnitude contemplated by the amendment could affect staffing and services. (WPTV; News4JAX)

Renters would not receive the homestead exemption and could face higher costs indirectly. The amendment provides no direct tax benefit to renters. Opponents argue that if local governments raise millage rates to compensate for lost revenue, owners of rental properties could face higher property taxes and pass some of those costs along to tenants. (Florida Policy Institute)

The tax burden could also shift toward businesses, second homeowners and newer Florida residents. The Tax Foundation argues that if local governments raise millage rates to recoup lost revenue, properties that do not qualify for the substantially higher homestead exemption, including those owned by new Florida residents and second homeowners, as well as commercial, rental, industrial and agricultural properties, could face higher property taxes. (Tax Foundation)

The fiscal impact would grow over time. The amount of homesteaded property value removed from the tax base would grow as the exemption increases to its full amount and is then adjusted annually for inflation. Opponents argue that this could put increasing pressure on local governments to raise tax rates, find other revenue, or reduce spending and services. (Florida House of Representatives Final Bill Analysis; Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research)

The path to expanding the exemption further is open-ended. Beyond the initial increase, the amendment leaves it to a future Legislature to establish a uniform procedure allowing counties and municipalities to raise the homestead exemption further, up to a home's full assessed value. The Florida Policy Institute has raised a fairness and accountability concern that additional increases could occur without voters having to approve each step. (Florida Policy Institute)

Opposition to Amendment 3 is broad. Organizations opposing or raising significant concerns about the amendment include groups representing local governments, law enforcement and fire rescue; engineers, planners and economic-development interests; parks, libraries and conservation advocates; manufactured-home owners; and voters. Statewide associations representing counties, cities, sheriffs, firefighters and special districts are among them, as are the League of Women Voters of Florida and 1000 Friends of Florida. (Vote No on 3 – Opposition Wall)

Political opposition includes some Republicans, although organized opposition has come largely from Democrats. Reps. Nathan Boyles and Patt Maney were the only two House Republicans to vote against the amendment; Maney cited concerns about the fiscal analysis of how local governments would replace lost revenue and about the original ballot language. The Save Our Services No on Amendment 3 campaign 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. (Mid Bay News; Save Our Services – No on Amendment 3; Florida Phoenix; WPTV)

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

A "yes" vote approves the homestead-exemption increases, lower non-homestead assessment cap and new rules governing local property-tax revenue described above, effective 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)