

PROPOSED 5-7-9 AMENDMENTS TALKING POINTS

Proposed Amendment 5

- This proposed amendment calls for the elimination of the state required local effort property taxes that provide a substantial portion of the funding for public education.
- The measure calls for replacing the property tax with a one penny increase in the state sales tax and the elimination of some sales tax exemptions. However, these replacement taxes are not expected to generate the same amount of revenues as are currently derived from local effort property taxes.

Proposed Amendment 7

- This proposed amendment calls for the removal of current language from the state constitution that prohibits the use of taxpayers' money for religious institutions.
- The anticipated impact of this measure is expected to be the transfer of public funding from public education to religious schools.

Proposed Amendment 9

- This proposed amendment resurrects the old vouchers issue to provide taxpayers' money to fund private school tuitions.
- This proposed amendment would require school districts to allocate at least 65 percent of their state funding to classroom instruction. It should be noted that most Florida school districts already earmark more than this percentage of their state funding for teaching and learning.

SUMMARY

- Proposed Florida Constitutional Amendments 5-7-9 separately and together would potentially divert billions of dollars from public education in Florida and deprive millions of students of the quality educations they deserve.
- All three measures contain major unknown elements that would not become apparent until after passage, including:
 1. For proposed Amendment 5, how the billions of dollars that would be lost by the elimination of local property taxes would be fully replaced.
 2. For proposed Amendment 7, exactly where taxpayers' money will be diverted.
 3. For proposed Amendment 9, a clear definition for what types of institutions could be funded through the voucher program.
- Public education in Florida is already funded at 50th in the nation – dead last! Additionally, hundreds of millions of dollars are being slashed from school district budgets in Florida as a result of the current economic downturn.
- Proposed Amendments 5-7-9 worsen this already dismal economic picture for public education with permanent measures that potentially drain billions more dollars away from public education.