

The Great Florida Property Tax Illusion: An Update

In June, Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature approved a proposed constitutional amendment called **"Save Our Homes from Excessive Property Taxes."** The measure will appear on the November 2026 ballot and must receive 60 percent voter approval to take effect.

On the surface, that sounds like an easy choice. But this debate is about much more than reducing tax bills. It is about changing the relationship between local communities and the state government. Supporters present it as tax relief for homeowners frustrated by rising housing costs and insurance premiums. But Florida is not simply debating a tax cut. Florida is debating a fundamental redesign of how local governments are financed.

For decades, Florida has operated under the principle that decisions affecting local residents should largely be made locally. County commissioners and city council members determine budgets, set priorities, and answer directly to the voters who elected them. If citizens dislike those choices, they have the power to elect different leaders.

The proposed amendment would sharply reduce the money available to counties and cities by phasing out much of the property tax revenue that supports local services. State estimates project revenue losses in the billions of dollars each year.

That money currently pays for many of the services people depend on every day: police and fire protection, emergency medical response, flood-control projects, mosquito management, libraries, parks, road maintenance, code enforcement, and public-health programs. It also funds critical infrastructure, including stormwater systems, water and sewer improvements, and neighborhood services that help maintain both safety and property values.

The question voters should ask is straightforward: if local governments no longer collect enough revenue to provide these services, where will the money come from?

Communities that cannot fund themselves will inevitably look elsewhere for support, most likely to Tallahassee. As financial dependence grows, decision-making authority is likely to shift. Officials who once answered primarily to local voters could find themselves increasingly reliant on state leaders to fill budget gaps.

Tax relief is an important goal, and homeowners deserve serious discussion about affordability. But before Floridians cast their ballots in November, they should understand that the choice before them involves more than taxes. It will help determine who shapes the future of their communities.