

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HJR 53 Single Subject Requirement for Revisions or Amendments to the Constitution
SPONSOR(S): Byrd, Payne and others
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SJR 74, SJR 86

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Civil Justice Subcommittee	14 Y, 0 N	Jones	Poche
2) State Affairs Committee	22 Y, 0 N	Card	Williamson
3) Judiciary Committee	18 Y, 0 N	Jones	Poche

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Florida voters can amend the state Constitution by approving an amendment originating from one of five sources: the Legislature, the Constitution Revision Commission (CRC), the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission (TBRC), a citizen initiative, or a constitutional convention. A citizen initiative must embrace only one subject, but proposals originating from the other sources may embrace multiple subjects.

HJR 53 proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution that, if approved by the voters, will require any proposed revision or amendment submitted by the CRC or the TBRC to be limited to a single subject. This would prohibit the CRC or TBRC from bundling separate, unrelated issues into a single proposal for consideration by voters.

The joint resolution has a nonrecurring fiscal impact on the Department of State for the publication of the proposed constitutional amendment in newspapers of general circulation in each county and for publication of booklets or posters with the amendment language for the supervisors of elections.

The joint resolution, if passed by the Legislature, would be considered by the electorate at the next general election on November 3, 2020. If adopted at the 2020 general election, the resolution would take effect January 5, 2021.

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Florida Constitution must be passed by three-fifths of the membership of each house of the Legislature to appear on the next general election ballot. If placed on the ballot, the Constitution requires at least 60 percent voter approval for passage.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Background

The Florida Constitution is the charter of the liberties of Floridians.¹ It may be amended only if the voters approve an amendment originating from the Legislature, the Constitution Revision Commission (CRC), the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission (TBRC), a citizen initiative, or a constitutional convention.² Any initiative proposed by the people must embrace only one subject,³ but proposals that originate from the other sources are not so limited.⁴

Constitution Revision Commission

The Florida Constitution was revised extensively in 1968 by three joint resolutions proposed by the Legislature and approved by the voters. The revisions included establishing the CRC as a means of proposing constitutional revisions to the voters, and the requirement that it convene once every 20 years, beginning in 1977. Three CRCs have convened, in 1977-1978, 1997-1998, and 2017-2018.⁵ The CRC has authority to propose to voters a revision of all or any part of the Florida Constitution.⁶

The CRC is composed of the following 37 members:

- The Attorney General.
- Fifteen members selected by the Governor.
- Nine members selected by the President of the Senate.
- Nine members selected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
- Three members selected by the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court.⁷

The Governor must appoint a chair from among the 37 members.⁸ The CRC's task is to examine the Constitution and decide which, if any, amendments to propose to the voters. The amendments must be submitted to the Secretary of State at least 180 days before the next general election.⁹ In turn, the amendments must be submitted to the voters at the next general election held more than 90 days after submission to the Secretary of State.¹⁰ To become effective, an amendment must be approved by at least 60 percent of the votes cast on the measure.¹¹ If an amendment's effective date is not specified, it is effective the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January following the general election.¹²

Taxation and Budget Reform Commission

The TBRC, created in 1988, meets every 20 years to review in detail the state's budgetary process, including the state's revenue and expenditure needs and tax structure, and the productivity and efficiency of the government. The TBRC also examines constitutional limitations on taxation and expenditures at the state and local level and reviews the state's comprehensive planning, budgeting and needs assessment processes.¹³

¹ *Browning v. Florida Hometown Democracy, Inc., PAC*, 29 So. 3d 1053, 1064 (Fla. 2010) (internal citations omitted).

² Art. XI, Fla. Const.

³ Art. XI, s. 3, Fla. Const.

⁴ Art. XI, ss. 1, 2, 4, 6, Fla. Const.

⁵ Constitution Revision Commission, History, <http://flcrc.gov/about/history.html> (last visited Apr. 8, 2019).

⁶ Art. XI, s. 2(c), Fla. Const.

⁷ Art. XI, s. 2(a), Fla. Const.

⁸ Art. XI, s. 2(b), Fla. Const.

⁹ Art. XI, s. 2(c), Fla. Const.

¹⁰ Art. XI, s. 5(a), Fla. Const.

¹¹ Art. XI, s. 5(e), Fla. Const.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Art. XI, s. 6(d), Fla. Const.

The TBRC is composed of the following 25 members:

- Eleven members selected by the Governor.
- Seven members selected by the President of the Senate.
- Seven members selected by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.¹⁴

The TBRC also includes four non-voting ex officio members.¹⁵ The TBRC must issue a report proposing to the Legislature any recommended statutory changes related to taxation and budgeting.¹⁶ Similar to the CRC, the TBRC may submit proposed constitutional amendments directly to the people, but only within the subject of taxation or the state budgetary process.

Bundling or "Logrolling"

The Constitution requires each citizen initiative proposal to be limited to one subject.¹⁷ This prevents bundling multiple issues into one proposal, also known as "logrolling." However, neither the CRC nor the TBRC is prohibited from bundling or logrolling.¹⁸ Speaking specifically to the CRC, the Florida Supreme Court recently held:

Unlike proposed amendments that originate through initiative petitions, amendments proposed by the CRC are not bound by the single-subject rule limiting amendments to one subject. . . . the Florida Constitution expressly authorizes bundling, as it gives the CRC authority to revise the entire constitution or any part of it. The power to amend the whole constitution in one proposal necessarily includes the lesser power to amend parts of the constitution in one proposal.¹⁹

The most recent CRC convened in 2017-2018 and proposed eight amendments to the Florida Constitution, seven of which appeared on the 2018 general election ballot.²⁰ Some of the proposals contained multiple unrelated subjects,²¹ requiring voters to decide whether to vote for an amendment that combined changes they liked with unrelated changes they did not like. One proposal, for example, combined a proposal to ban drilling for oil with a ban on vaping in indoor workplaces.

Effect of Proposed Changes

HJR 53 proposes amending the Florida Constitution to require any proposed revision or amendment submitted by the CRC or the TBRC to be limited to a single subject matter. This would prevent either commission from bundling or logrolling different substantive proposals into a single proposal.

The joint resolution must pass each chamber with a three-fifths vote before it may be placed on the ballot. Thereafter, it must be approved by at least 60 percent of the electors voting on the measure. If approved by the voters, the joint resolution will take effect January 5, 2021.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Not applicable.

¹⁴ Art. XI, s. 6(a), Fla. Const.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Art. XI, s. 6(e), Fla. Const.

¹⁷ Art. XI, s. 3, Fla. Const.

¹⁸ Art. XI, ss. 2 and 6, Fla. Const.

¹⁹ *Detzner v. Anstead*, 256 So. 3d 820, 823-24 (Fla. 2018).

²⁰ Constitution Revision Commission, CRC Office – Press Release, <http://flcrc.gov/Media/PressReleases/Show/1099.html> (last visited Apr. 8, 2019); *Detzner v. League of Women Voters of Florida*, 256 So. 3d 803 (Fla. 2018) (removing Revision 8 from the ballot).

²¹ Fred Grimm, *Florida Ballot Proposals Bundled with Disparate Subjects, Deceptive Wording*, SUN SENTINEL (Apr. 27, 2018), <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/fl-op-column-fred-grimm-florida-ballot-proposals-20180426-story.html>.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

Article XI, s. 5(d) of the Florida Constitution requires publication of a proposed amendment in a newspaper of general circulation in each county. The Division of Elections within the Department of State must advertise the full text of the amendment twice in a newspaper of general circulation in each county where the amendment will appear on the ballot. The Division must also provide each supervisor of elections with either booklets or posters displaying the full text of each proposed amendment.²²

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable. The mandates provision applies only to general laws, not a joint resolution to amend the Constitution.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

Not applicable.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/ COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

²² See s. 101.171, F.S.
STORAGE NAME: h0053e.JDC
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