

November Election

- Don't forget you only have until Tuesday (October 10) to register to vote in time to participate in this November's election.
- Registering to vote is simple, easy, fast and convenient.
- It is our duty as Texans and Americans to be registered and to be voters in every election.
- Take the first step towards becoming a voter by registering to vote this week!
- You can print an application at VoteTexas.gov or call the Harris County Tax/voter registration office at 713-274-VOTE (8683)
- Election Day is November 7. Early voting begins October 23 and ends November 3. To see a list of Early voting locations go to HarrisVotes.org or call the County Clerk at (713) 755-6965.
- Seniors 65+ can request a mail-in ballot. Applications must be received by October 27.

- This November, there will several important ballot initiatives questions, as well as some city and school elections. These initiatives will have an important impact on all of us for year's to come.
- No matter how big or small, every election is important! Make your voice heard.

November 2017 – Constitutional Ballot Explainer

Proposition 1

Summary

Proposition 1 would fix an unintended consequence of current law. Unlike a partially disabled veteran whose home is donated in full, a veteran who paid part of the cost of a donated home cannot receive the property tax exemption created by Tax Code, sec. 11.132. This can lead to an unanticipated property tax burden that the veteran may not have the income to offset. No disabled veteran should be at risk, due to an ongoing, unaffordable property tax burden, of losing a home that is specifically donated to accommodate the veteran's needs. In this spirit, Proposition 1 would clarify the intent of existing law and provide the same well-earned property tax exemption to a greater number of partially disabled veterans who receive donated homes.

Wording

“The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of part of the market value of the residence homestead of a partially disabled veteran or the surviving spouse of a partially disabled veteran if the residence homestead was donated to the disabled veteran by a charitable organization for less than the market value of the residence homestead and harmonizing certain related provisions of the Texas Constitution.”

Proposition 2

Summary

Proposition 2 would amend Texas Constitution to revise the cap on fees that may be charged when making a home equity loan, allow the refinancing of home equity loans into non-home equity loans, revise a provision governing home equity lines of credit, and amend the list of the types of approved lenders. The proposed amendment would lower the cap on fees charged to borrowers and revise the type of fees that count toward the cap. The cap would be lowered from 3 percent to 2 percent of the principal of the loan.

Some opponents say that Proposition 2 could raise costs for borrowers and roll back important consumer protections. These protections should be continued because they have worked for both consumers and lenders while contributing to a stable housing market that was not as seriously affected by the recent housing bubble as those in other states. The proposed changes to the fee cap would raise, not lower, costs for consumers and could create incentives to lenders to make loans just to generate more income from fees.

Wording

The constitutional amendment to establish a lower amount for expenses that can be charged to a borrower and removing certain financing expense limitations for a home equity loan, establishing certain authorized lenders to make a home equity loan, changing certain options for the refinancing of home equity loans, changing the threshold for an advance of a home equity line of credit, and allowing home equity loans on agricultural homesteads.

Proposition 3

Summary

Proposition 3 would amend Texas Constitution to create an exception to the requirement that state officers continue to perform their duties until their successors are duly qualified. The exception would apply to officers appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate who did not receive a salary. The period for which an appointed officeholder would be required to continue to perform duties would end on the last day of the first regular session of the Legislature that began after the officer's term expired.

Wording

The constitutional amendment limiting the service of certain officeholders appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate after the expiration of the person's term of office.

Proposition 4

Summary

Proposition 4 would amend Texas Constitution authorizing the Legislature to require courts to notify the attorney general when a party to litigation filed a petition, motion, or other pleading challenging the constitutionality of a state statute if the party notified the court of the challenge. The proposition also would authorize the Legislature to establish a period of up to 45 days after a court gave the required notice during which the court could not enter a judgment holding the statute unconstitutional.

Many opponents say the Texas Constitution should not be amended to undermine the state's separation of powers doctrine, which ensures that each branch of government may exercise its powers without interference from the others. The Legislature should not be authorized to enact laws that might erode the doctrine by establishing a period during which a court may not exercise its power. The Legislature should not be able to establish procedures that could intrude on the workings of the judiciary and potentially delay relief for those challenging a law as unconstitutional. Texans should be able to receive relief from unconstitutional laws without a legislatively imposed waiting period.

Wording

The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to require a court to provide notice to the attorney general of a challenge to the constitutionality of a state statute and authorizing the legislature to prescribe a waiting period before the court may enter a judgment holding the statute unconstitutional.