

Early voting ends today at Courthouse for Amendment election

Early voting in the 2019 Texas Constitutional Amendment election ends today at the Coke County Courthouse in Robert Lee. Hours for early voting are 8 am to 1 pm on Friday. The Election is set for Tuesday, November 5, 2019. Polls on election day will be open from 7 am to 7 pm at the Courthouse for voters in Precincts 1 and 3 and at the Bronte Senior Citizen Building for voters in Precincts 2 and 4.

There will be ten proposed amendments to the Texas constitution on the ballot. What they are and a brief explanation are detailed below.

STATE OF TEXAS PROPOSITION 1 (HJR 72) – “The constitutional amendment permitting a person to hold more than one office as a municipal judge at the same time.”

HJR 72 proposes a constitutional amendment permitting an elected municipal judge to serve as a municipal judge in more than one municipality at the same time. Unlike an appointed municipal judge, an elected municipal judge may not concurrently hold another municipal judge office. This amendment would allow an elected municipal judge to serve as a municipal judge in more than one municipality at the same time, in the same manner as appointed municipal judges.

STATE OF TEXAS PROPOSITION 2 (SJR 79) – “The constitutional amendment providing for the issuance of additional general obligation bonds by the Texas Water Development Board in an amount not to exceed \$200 million to provide financial assistance for the development of certain projects in economically distressed areas.”

SJR 79 proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the Texas Water Development Board to issue additional general obligation bonds, in an amount that does not exceed \$200 million, for the economically distressed areas program. These bonds can only be used to provide financing for the development of water supply and sewer service projects in those economically distressed areas as defined by law.

STATE OF TEXAS PROPOSITION 3 (HJR 34) – “The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for a temporary exemption from ad valorem taxation of a portion of the appraised value of certain property damaged by a disaster.”

HJR 34 proposes a constitutional amendment allowing the legislature to temporarily exempt from ad valorem taxation a portion of certain property located in an area covered by a disaster declaration of the governor. The proposed amendment would allow the legislature to prescribe

the method of determining the amount of the tax exemption and the duration of the exemption and also would allow the legislature to create any additional eligibility requirements for the tax exemption.

RPT Recommends you vote FOR-STATE OF TEXAS PROPOSITION 4 (HJR 38) – “The constitutional amendment prohibiting the imposition of an individual income tax, including a tax on an individual’s share of partnership and unincorporated association income.”

HJR 38 proposes a constitutional amendment prohibiting the state from imposing or collecting an individual income tax, including an individual’s share of partnership and unincorporated association income. There is no current constitutional bar on imposing or collecting an individual income tax.

This is Supported by plank 171; State Income Tax Ban: “We support maintaining the current ban on state income taxes in Texas.”

In 1993, voters approved an amendment that lets the Legislature impose a personal income tax only if a statewide referendum is approved by voters and if the new revenue goes to school property tax cuts and education programs.

This amendment would add the additional requirement of a 2/3 supermajority of both chambers to be acquired before it goes to the voters, making it much harder to impose a State income tax.

RPT Recommends you vote FOR-STATE OF TEXAS PROPOSITION 5 (SJR 24) – “The constitutional amendment dedicating the revenue received from the existing state sales and use taxes that are imposed on sporting goods to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Historical Commission to protect Texas’ natural areas, water quality, and history by acquiring, managing, and improving state and local parks and historic sites while not increasing the rate of the state and use of taxes.”

SJR 24 proposes a constitutional amendment that would automatically appropriate the net revenue received from the portion of the state’s tax revenue received on sales of sporting goods to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas Historical Commission (THC). The legislature would maintain the authority to determine the specific uses of the funds and their allocation between TPWD and THC.

This is supported by plank 172; Truth in Taxation: We urge that taxes established for a particular purpose shall not be used for any other purpose. Simply put, this ensures that tax dollars are sent where they were intended to be sent. Currently, a

significant portion of the funds are used by the comptroller of public accounts to certify the biennial state budget. Prop. 5 aims to ensure all sales tax revenue from sporting good sales goes to the Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Historical Commission.

STATE OF TEXAS PROPOSITION 6 (HJR 12) – “The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to increase by \$3 billion the maximum bond amount authorized for the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.”

HJR 12 proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to increase the maximum bond amount for the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) from \$3 billion to \$6 billion to be issued by the Texas Public Finance Authority. CPRIT was created in 2007 to promote and fund cancer research in Texas. CPRIT uses bond proceeds to award grants for cancer research and prevention.

STATE OF TEXAS PROPOSITION 7 (HJR 151) – “The constitutional amendment allowing increased distributions to the available school fund.”

HJR 151 proposes a constitutional amendment allowing increased distributions from \$300 million per year to \$600 million per year to the available school fund and also allowing the State Board of Education, the General Land Office, and other entities that manage revenue from land or other properties held in the permanent school fund to distribute certain revenue to the available school fund.

RPT Recommends you vote FOR-STATE OF TEXAS PROPOSITION 8 (HJR 4) – “The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the flood infrastructure fund to assist in the financing of drainage, flood mitigation, and flood control projects.”

HJR 4 proposes a constitutional amendment creating the flood infrastructure fund as a special fund in the state treasury, using money appropriated from the economic stabilization fund. The flood infrastructure fund would provide additional resources to implement plans to mitigate flood damage. The proposed amendment would authorize the Texas Water Development Board to use money in the flood infrastructure fund for drainage, flood mitigation, or flood control projects. The proposed amendment also would authorize the creation of separate accounts in the flood infrastructure fund as necessary to administer the fund or authorized projects.

This is supported by Plank 51; Flooding Mitigation, Hurricane, and Early Warning of Impending Disaster: We support the immediate study, implementation, and construction of projects that will:

- Address river, bayou, reservoir, and other flood threats to public and private property.
- Seek the input of those most likely to be affected by a casualty to public and private property, to include infrastructure and facilities that affect national security.
- Address the risk of storm or tidal surge that affects the critical industries along the Gulf Coast.
- Immediately create an early warning system that will immediately alert residents to an impending flood, wind, or casualty weather event.
- Establish regional Flood Control Districts where necessary for counties to resolve joint flooding issues.
- Provide for funds to complete these projects from federal, state, and local funds, to include specifically targeted taxes for the purpose and never for any other purpose.

We strongly urge that the Republican Party of Texas make

this a legislative priority for the 2019 Legislature. Government at all levels must work together to avoid the historical bent to push projects, safety, and implementation into the future. Projects must be of most urgent priority now in order to avoid further trauma; loss of life; loss of personal, government, and business wealth; and diminution of the tax base.

STATE OF TEXAS PROPOSITION 9 (HJR 95) – “The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to exempt from ad valorem taxation precious metal held in a precious metal depository located in this state.”

HJR 95 proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to create a property tax exemption for precious metal held in a precious metal depository located in this state.

STATE OF TEXAS PROPOSITION 10 (SJR 32) – “The constitutional amendment to allow the transfer of a law enforcement animal to a qualified caretaker in certain circumstances.”

SJR 32 proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to allow a state agency or political subdivision to transfer a law enforcement animal to the animal’s handler or another qualified caretaker in certain circumstances. Currently, the Texas Constitution prevents the transfer of certain public property, such as law enforcement animals, to a private person or organization at no cost. This amendment authorizes the legislature to allow the transfer of a law enforcement animal to the animal’s handler or another qualified caretaker at no cost, upon the animal’s retirement or at another time if the transfer is determined to be in the animal’s best interest.

[Editor’s Note: The explanations and recommendations in the above article are from the Republican Party of Texas.]

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