

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS 2017

Proposition 1 - **FOR**

HJR 1 by Rep. Bell (Sponsor: Sen. Creighton). Currently, partially disabled veterans get a property tax exemption according to the percentage of their disability on any homes entirely donated to them. This proposed amendment would tweak that law to allow disabled veterans who pay up to half of the donated home to get an exemption too. There is no significant cost to the state.

This specific tax break for veterans would be expanded to include an additional, but unspecified, number of disabled veterans.

Proposition 2 - **AGAINST**

SJR 60 by Rep. D. Bonnen (Sponsor: L. Taylor). This proposed amendment makes several changes to the home equity loan laws that bankers and realtors desire. First, although the cap on fees is lowered from 3 to 2 percent, several items are not counted towards that cap, thereby potentially allowing a higher dollar amount to be assessed in fees. Second, it allows home equity loans to be refinanced as non-home equity loans, resulting in the loss of judicial foreclosure requirements and the risk of losing other assets. Third, home equity lines of credit would now be capped at 80 percent, rather than 50 percent, of the home's market value.

Consumers borrowing against their home equity will lose some of the protections on their home traditionally provided by the Texas Constitution.

Proposition 3 – **NO POSITION**

SJR 34 by Sen. Birdwell (Sponsor: Rep. Geren). Current law allows for non-salaried gubernatorial appointees to keep serving in their positions if no successor has been duly qualified. As a result, some appointees are held over long after their term expires. The proposed amendment would allow these appointees to remain in office until the end of the next regular session after their term expires.

Proposition 4 - **AGAINST**

SJR 6 by Sen. Zaffirini (Sponsor: Rep. Schofield). A statute required the state attorney general to be given notice that a state law's constitutionality was challenged, and also prevented a court from striking the law as unconstitutional for 45 days after the notice. That statute was stricken under the principle of separation of powers (the legislature can't tell a court what to do.) SJR 6 proposes to authorize the notice and 45-day waiting period.

Courts should be able to give Texans relief from unconstitutional laws as soon as possible without a mandated waiting period.

Proposition 5 - **FOR**

HJR 100 by Rep. Kuempel (Sponsor: Sen. Hinojosa). In 2015, voters allowed professional sports teams to conduct charitable raffles during home games. Teams can conduct so-called 50/50 raffles where half the money raised during a game would go towards cash prizes and the other half would benefit for charities such as youth summer programs, food bank support, etc. Under existing law, only professional teams would qualify such as the NFL, NBA, Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer, and the National Hockey League. The proposed amendment would expand the number of professional sports leagues that qualify and would include the Women's NBA, American Hockey League, United Soccer League, NASCAR, Professional Golf Association and others.

Charitable raffles at more sports events.

Proposition 6 - **FOR**

SJR 1 by Sen. Cambell (Sponsor: Rep. Fallon). Existing law provides the surviving spouses of a member of the U.S. armed forces killed in the line of duty a partial or total exemption from property taxes. This amendment would extend that benefit to the surviving spouses of first responders killed in the line of duty.

First responders should not have to worry that their families will suffer financial hardship if they make the ultimate sacrifice in their line of duty.

Proposition 7 - **FOR**

HJR 37 by Rep. Eric Johnson (Sponsor: Sen. Hancock). This amendment would create the Texas Savings Promotion Act, which allows credit unions to offer prizes to members who deposit savings into their own accounts. The proposition is meant to address possible conflicts with the Texas Constitution's prohibition on gambling.

The so-called "prize-linked savings accounts" are an innovative way to induce people to save more, thereby preventing them from resorting to payday lenders.

For additional information, please refer to this document:

<http://www.hro.house.state.tx.us/pdf/focus/amend85.pdf>