

2022 Ballot Recommendation: VOTE NO ON AMENDMENT 2

<p>Florida Amendment 2: Abolishing the Constitution Revision Commission</p>
<p>Ballot Summary: <i>Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to abolish the Constitution Revision Commission, which meets at 20-year intervals and is scheduled to next convene in 2037, as a method of submitting proposed amendments or revisions to the State Constitution to electors of the state for approval. This amendment does not affect the ability to revise or amend the State Constitution through citizen initiative, constitutional convention, the Taxation and Budget Reform Commission, or legislative joint resolution.</i></p>
<p>Common Cause Florida Recommendation: Vote NO</p>
<p>Overview: The Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) is a 37-member commission that convenes every 20 years, receives proposals from the public and hears about issues that matter to Floridians across the state, and proposes changes to the Florida Constitution. CRC members are appointed by the governor (15 members), legislative leaders (18), and the Florida Supreme court (3). The attorney general also serves on the CRC. CRC proposals are put directly on the ballot for public vote and pass if 60% of voters approve. The CRC is currently one of the main pathways to put constitutional amendments on the ballot, alongside amendments proposed by the legislature and amendments proposed through the citizen initiative process. Amendment 2 would abolish the CRC, removing this pathway to amend the Florida Constitution.</p>
<p>Background: The CRC was established in 1968 after a long period during which modernizing the Florida Constitution had been extremely difficult. The CRC has convened three times, in 1977-78, 1997-98 and 2017-18. The next CRC is scheduled to convene in 2037. The proposals of the 1977-78 CRC did not pass initially, but several were passed by Florida voters in later years. Eight of the nine proposals of the 1997-98 CRC were passed by voters. The 2017-18 CRC placed 8 measures on the ballot (covering 20 different issues), 7 of which passed (all except one that was blocked by the courts). Changes to the Florida Constitution that have arisen directly or indirectly through the CRC process include the right to privacy, accessible polling places, safe and high-quality public schools, public campaign financing, ethics reform, and a ban of off-shore drilling.</p> <p>The current proposal to abolish the CRC came about, in large part, from dissatisfaction with the 2017-18 CRC, which engaged in “bundling” (combining unrelated issues together into a single ballot measure). Bundling produces confusion and means that voters have to vote yes or no on all the issues in the measure, even if they agree with one and disagree with another. The 2017-18 CRC was also seen by many as being particularly partisan, in part due to the appointment of partisan members and registered lobbyists.</p>
<p>Equity Impact: If approved, this would remove a pathway for the people of Florida to amend their Constitution. Alongside recent legislative measures that have made the citizen initiative process more difficult and more expensive, this would further diminish citizen voice and input in state governance. It would invest more power in the legislature, which has a track record of engaging in measures (including voting restrictions and gerrymandering) that diminish the voices of marginalized communities in Florida.</p>
<p>Who Supports: This is a legislatively referred constitutional amendment introduced by Senator Jeff Brandes. It passed the State Senate 27-12 (all Republicans and 3 Democrats in favor, 13 Democrats opposed) and the State House 86-28 (75 Republicans and 11 Democrats in favor, 28 Democrats opposed, 3 Republicans and 11 Democrats didn’t vote). No other supporters are known at this time.</p>
<p>Who Opposes: Common Cause Florida, League of Women Voters of Florida, LeRoy Collins Institute</p>
<p>Common Cause Florida Position: The CRC should not be abolished, it should be reformed to require single-issue ballot measures and improve the appointment process so future CRCs are more bipartisan and have more balanced influence from the three branches of government (governor, legislature and supreme court).</p>