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Ballot Language	Explanation: (League of Women Voters)	Summary: (Liberty Institute)
1 The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a 100 percent or totally disabled veteran.	Currently the Tax Code fully exempts residential homesteads of totally disabled veterans from property taxes. Proposition 1 would let the legislature give a property tax exemption to the surviving spouse of a totally disabled veteran if the property had been exempted from property taxes under the disabled veteran's exemption, if it was the residence of the surviving spouse when the veteran died and remained the surviving spouse's residence homestead thereafter, and if the surviving spouse had not remarried. This exemption would follow the surviving spouse if a new homestead were purchased and the surviving spouse had not remarried. The exemption would be limited to the dollar amount of the exemption of the previous qualifying homestead. If passed, this exemption would apply to tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2012.	Allows surviving spouse of disabled veteran to receive property tax exemption on residential homestead
2 The constitutional amendment providing for the issuance of additional general obligation bonds by the Texas Water Development Board in an amount not to exceed \$6 billion at any time outstanding.	The Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) makes loans at very low interest rates to cities, towns, water supply corporations, and various other political sub-divisions across the state. These loans are used to finance a variety of local water projects, including infrastructure improvement or water treatment plants. The TWDB's current bonding capacity of \$2 billion is not sufficient to meet the needs of local governments that are upgrading infrastructure to meet the growing demand. The proposed amendment would authorize the TWDB to issue additional bonds as long as the aggregate amount of bonds outstanding did not exceed \$6 billion. This ongoing authority is known as "evergreen" authority. These bonds, if approved, would be self-supporting and not a detriment to the state budget, would not cost the state any money from the general revenue fund, and would not count toward the state's constitutional debt limit. The principal and interest payments on the loans would be paid by the political sub-divisions. The interest paid on the loans funds the agency.	Gives permanent bonding authority to Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to issue additional general obligation bonds
3 The constitutional amendment providing for the issuance of general obligation bonds of the State of Texas to finance educational loans to students.	The Hinson-Hazlewood College Student Loan Program provides low-interest loans to Texas residents who attend public or private higher education institutions in Texas and who have insufficient resources to finance a college education. The loan program uses general obligation bonds to finance the loans, which generally must be authorized by constitutional amendment. Since 1965, Texas voters have approved seven constitutional amendments authorizing \$1.86 billion in bonds for the HH loan program. It is projected that the remaining bonds will be exhausted by 2013. Proposition 3 would authorize additional bonds to be issued to support the HH loan program, but unlike the previous bond authorizations, the proposed amendment would not limit the total amount of bonds issued, as long as the aggregate amount did not exceed the total amount previously authorized by voters. This ongoing authority is known as "evergreen" authority.	Gives permanent bonding authority to Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to issue general obligation bonds to finance low interest students loans
4 The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to permit a county to issue bonds or notes to finance the development or redevelopment of an unproductive, underdeveloped, or blighted area and to pledge for repayment of the bonds or notes increases in ad valorem taxes imposed by the county on property in the area. The amendment does not provide authority for increasing ad valorem tax rates.	Currently the Texas Constitution allows the legislature to authorize incorporated cities and towns to use a mechanism called "tax increment financing" to finance the development or redevelopment of an unproductive, underdeveloped, or blighted area. Under this mechanism the bonds or notes to finance the development are repaid using increases in tax revenues on the property in the area. The revenue increases come from increases in property values in the development area, not from an increased tax rate, which is not authorized. Proposition 4 would expand the authorization to include counties, so that tax increment financing could be used in unincorporated areas.	Would expand troubling practice of using property taxes to fund transportation and other redevelopment projects. Could create incentive to appraise property in the reinvestment zone at a higher value to repay bonds, creating a higher tax burden for property owners in the area. Could give counties new incentive for redevelopment takings.
5 The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to allow cities or counties to enter into interlocal contracts with other cities or counties without the imposition of a tax or the provision of a sinking fund.	Currently under the Texas Constitution, cities with a population greater than 5,000 and all counties and cities bordering on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico may not create any debt without levying a tax sufficient to pay the interest and provide a sinking fund of at least two percent. A contract longer than one year between local governments has been interpreted as a debt under certain circumstances, requiring the tax assessment and the creation of a sinking fund. Proposition 5, along with its enabling legislation, would authorize those cities and counties to enter into interlocal contracts longer than one year with other cities or counties without meeting the tax and sinking fund requirements.	Allows interlocal contracts by cities and counties without a tax or a sinking fund

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<p>6</p> <p>The constitutional amendment clarifying references to the permanent school fund, allowing the General Land Office to distribute revenue from permanent school fund land or other properties to the available school fund to provide additional funding for public education, and providing for an increase in the market value of the permanent school fund for the purpose of allowing increased distributions from the available school fund.</p>	<p>The Permanent School Fund (PSF) was established in the Texas Constitution of 1876, which set aside half of Texas' remaining public lands to help finance public schools. Several different terms are used in the Constitution to refer to this fund, and Proposition 6 would replace other terms with the single term, "Permanent School Fund" in all references. The proposed amendment also provides for potential increases in distributions from the PSF to the Available School Fund (ASF), which provides funding to school districts on a per-student basis and supports classroom instructional materials and technology. Currently, the General Land Office (GLO) is responsible for managing the public school lands; proceeds from the land and mineral rights are held in the PSF. The State Board of Education (SBOE) manages the investment of the PSF and, if the fund's investment performance permits, makes distributions from the PSF to the ASF. Only interest or revenue income from the PSF can be spent; the principal amount remains intact and will continue to benefit the public schools of Texas. The proposed amendment would permit the distribution of some revenue derived from the public school lands directly to the ASF. The GLO, or an entity other than the SBOE with the responsibility for the management of permanent school fund land or other properties, would be permitted to transfer up to \$300 million per year of revenues derived from the public lands that year. This provision addresses problems found by the Attorney General in a previous statute allowing such distributions. The proposed amendment would also change the way the market value of the PSF is calculated by including additional assets that are currently not included (i.e., discretionary real estate investments and cash in the state treasury derived from PSF property). At the beginning of each legislative session, the SBOE determines the rate (up to a maximum rate specified in the Constitution) of the market value of the PSF that will go to the ASF. Given the current value of the PSF and the rate determined by the SBOE at the beginning of the last legislative session, this proposed amendment might provide approximately \$75 million more to the ASF in both FY 2011-2012 and 2012-13.</p>	<p>Gives greater authority to the School Land Board (SLB) to distribute funds from Permanent School Fund (PSF) to Available School Fund (ASF)</p>
<p>7</p> <p>The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to permit conservation and reclamation districts in El Paso County to issue bonds supported by ad valorem taxes to fund the development and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities.</p>	<p>Under the Texas Constitution, the legislature can authorize specified counties or water districts to create conservation and reclamation districts that would issue bonds and levy taxes to develop parks and recreational facilities that were not so authorized before September 13, 2003. Currently 10 counties are specified; Proposition 7 would add El Paso County to that list. If the proposed amendment passes, voters in the district would have to approve or deny creation of a combined city/county tax district in El Paso County in order for the legislature to authorize a district to issue bonds or incur indebtedness.</p>	<p>Authorizes El Paso County districts to issue bonds supported by property taxes for parks and recreational facilities</p>
<p>8</p> <p>The constitutional amendment providing for the appraisal for ad valorem tax purposes of open-space land devoted to water-stewardship purposes on the basis of its productive capacity.</p>	<p>Property that is appraised for open land use (currently for agriculture, ranching and/or wildlife preservation) is taxed on the basis of its productive capacity, rather than at full market value. This proposed amendment would add a new water conservation option, called a "water stewardship valuation," to land already appraised for open land use. This would not decrease property taxes on the land, but would give open-space landowners another option to engage in activities on their property that benefit both water quality and quantity. Management plans for individual water stewardship would be created in association with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and could include brush control to increase stream flow and groundwater storage, land management that would enhance infiltration into soil around playas, water reuse projects in wetlands to clean water naturally, and erosion control to impede silting of reservoirs</p>	<p>Provides for taxation of open-space land devoted to water stewardship based on its productive capacity</p>
<p>9</p> <p>The constitutional amendment authorizing the governor to grant a pardon to a person who successfully completes a term of deferred adjudication community supervision.</p>	<p>In some criminal cases, if a defendant pleads guilty or no contest, a judge may defer adjudication of guilt and place the defendant on probation with community supervision. If the defendant successfully completes probation, the judge must dismiss the charges. Under current law, the governor can grant pardons after conviction, but not after deferred adjudication. The proposed amendment would add the authority to grant pardons after deferred adjudication as well. All other requirements for pardons would remain the same. When a pardon is granted, the criminal record may be expunged. A person who has completed deferred adjudication still has a criminal history record in the public domain.</p>	<p>Allows a pardon by the governor after successful deferred adjudication community supervision</p>
<p>10</p> <p>The constitutional amendment to change the length of the unexpired term that causes the automatic resignation of certain elected county or district officeholders if they become candidates for another office.</p>	<p>Under current law, if certain elected district or county office holders with more than one year left on their current terms announce for or become candidates for another office, they automatically resign from their current office. This "resign-to-run" provision was added to the Constitution in 1958 after the terms for certain officials were changed from two to four years. With a one-year unexpired term, it provided a window for elected officials to file for office by January 2 for an election within the same calendar year without resigning their offices. Because Senate Bill 100 changed the filing deadline for offices from January 2 of the primary election year to the second Monday in December of the preceding year, the one-year unexpired term no longer allowed the same opportunity for office holders to continue in their current office while running for a new office. Proposition 10 would change the length of the unexpired term that causes the automatic resignation from one year to one year and 30 days.</p>	<p>Lengthens period before county or district officials must resign to run for other office from one year to one year and 30 day</p>