

It is legal to print this guide prepared by San Antonio Tea Party and take it with you into the voting booth.

Ballot Language	ARGUMENTS			
	Liberty Institute		League of Women Voters	
	Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
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.	Recognizes the sacrifices made by disabled veterans and their surviving spouses. Would provide peace of mind to disabled veterans knowing surviving spouses will not be taxed out of their homes. State already grants certain surviving spouses the right to inherit some property tax breaks	By allowing the exemption to continue, local governments would receive less property tax revenue. Other taxpayers could be forced to make up loss in tax revenues. The state should not be granting tax exemptions at a time when essential services, such as schools and health care, are under extreme budgetary pressure	Surviving spouses of disabled veterans deserve support for the sacrifices they have made. Texas already gives some surviving spouses the right to inherit other property tax breaks, such as the school tax freeze available to homeowners at age 65 which is transferable to the surviving spouse who is at least 55 years old at the time of the transfer. Allowing the exemption to follow the surviving spouse to a new homestead property helps contain the cost. If the surviving spouse moves to a less expensive home, the more valuable original homestead property is no longer exempt. If the surviving spouse moves to a more expensive home, the surviving spouse can exempt only the value of the original homestead.	Extending the tax exemptions would decrease property tax revenue to local governments. Tax exemptions should not be extended when basic services such as schools, health care, parks, and transportation are critically underfunded.
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.	Without additional authority, the TWDB will be unable to provide financing to meet the states' growing water and wastewater needs. Secures uninterrupted bond or "evergreen" authority to the TWDB, not to exceed \$6 billion at any time, which would make funding more stable and would avoid costly future constitutional amendment elections. State's strong credit rating allows the TWDB to loan funds for major infrastructure projects to local water providers at lower rates	The jump in bonding capacity from \$2 billion to \$6 billion is too large. Authorizes state debt in perpetuity by allowing continuous issuance of new statebacked bonds that, in effect, could exceed \$6 billion cumulatively. The Legislature and voters should retain their oversight authority by approving new bond issuance authority periodically.	The TWDB has an excellent record of managing large bond portfolios without any defaults in the history of its Water/Wastewater Loan Program or State Revolving Fund programs. The Board's bonds consistently receive AAA ratings. The "evergreen" authority would enable the loan program to be continued without repeated and costly constitutional amendment elections. This type of ongoing authority was overwhelmingly approved by Texas voters in 2009 for state bonds issued by the Veteran's Land Board. Local water providers can get loans for major infrastructure projects at a much lower rate by borrowing the money from the TWDB.	The jump from \$2 billion to \$6 billion is too large. The ceiling should be raised in smaller increments, with periodic review by the legislature and voters. It is not clear how much new development and economic growth our water supply can sustain. We should determine first how much we should expand our water infrastructure. The "evergreen" authority would re-authorize the issuance of bonds previously approved and since paid off and retired. The legislature and the voters should maintain accountability for the administration of the funds by retaining their authority to approve the issuance of state bonds periodically

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<p>3 The constitutional amendment providing for the issuance of general obligation bonds of the State of Texas to finance educational loans to students.</p>	<p>Hinson-Hazlewood (HH) College Student Loan program has proven record of success and is self-supporting and not dependent on tax dollars. Secures uninterrupted bond or “evergreen” authority to the THECB, not to exceed total amount authorized by voters, which would make funding more stable and would avoid costly future constitutional amendment elections. With student financial aid reduced for fiscal 2012-2013, Texas students will need more sources of money for college.</p>	<p>National student loan debt presently exceeds national credit card debt, leading some to indentify student loans as a potential catalyst for a financial crisis. Authorizing these state-backed bonds would expand state debt and could be a large cost to the state if the economy faltered and there was a high rate of default on the loans. The Legislature and voters should retain their oversight authority by approving new bond issuance authority periodically. Texas voters in 1991 rejected authorizations for new student-loan bonds and should retain that authority.</p>	<p>The HH student loan program has a demonstrated record of success and is self-supporting, depending not on tax dollars, but on money from student loan repayments to pay the interest and principal on the bonds. Bonds for the program do not count against the state bond debt cap because they are financed through loan repayments, not general revenue. The “evergreen” authority would enable the student loan program to be continued without repeated and costly constitutional amendment elections. This type of ongoing authority was overwhelmingly approved by Texas voters in 2009 for state bonds issued by the Veteran’s Land Board. Recent reductions in federal financial aid and possible reductions in state programs increase the need for additional sources of college funding for Texas students. The loan program supports the state’s goal to improve student access to postsecondary education.</p>	<p>Though the program is self-supporting, the bonds are considered an obligation of the state, and the state is ultimately responsible for repaying the money borrowed. The current poor economy could increase the rate of default on the loans, affecting the program’s ability to be self-supporting. The “evergreen” authority would re-authorize the issuance of bonds originally approved as long as 40 years ago and since paid off and retired. The legislature and the voters should maintain accountability for the administration of the funds by retaining their authority to approve the issuance of state bonds periodically.</p>

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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.	<p>Counties need the same ability as cities and towns to issue bonds to finance development of unproductive, underdeveloped, or blighted areas.</p> <p>Economic development in reinvestment zones may increase property values, but properties in the zone would not be taxed at higher rates.</p> <p>Counties need all resources available to meet the transportation challenges facing the state.</p>	<p>Would expand troubling practice of using property taxes to fund transportation and other redevelopment projects.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Could give counties new incentive for redevelopment takings</p>	<p>Proposition 4 would allow counties to work together with cities and towns to designate reinvestment zones for transportation and other redevelopment projects, allowing them to maximize resources.</p> <p>Property values in a reinvestment zone may increase as a result of economic development, but no property in the zone would be taxed at a higher rate.</p>	<p>Property taxes should not be used to fund transportation and other redevelopment projects.</p> <p>Tax increment financing could create an incentive to increase property appraisals in reinvestment zones to repay the bonds and notes and thus divert funds from other pressing needs. Because the criteria for such zones are not well-defined, influential developers could get an area designated as a reinvestment zone, and existing businesses in the zone could end up paying higher taxes for development that does not benefit them, or may even benefit their competitors.</p>
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.	<p>Would give local governments the flexibility to consolidate more projects and services, increase efficiency, reduce duplicative efforts, and save costs to taxpayers from unnecessary annual contract renewals.</p>	<p>In some situations, multi-year interlocal agreements could constitute a debt and should require a tax and sinking fund.</p> <p>Removing constraint gives too much flexibility to local governments.</p>	<p>This proposition would give local governments more flexibility to consolidate projects and services over a term longer than one year in order to improve efficiency and reduce costs to taxpayers.</p>	<p>There may be some cases where multi-year interlocal agreements do constitute a debt and should require a tax and sinking fund; removing this constraint gives too much flexibility to local governments.</p>

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6 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.	In a time when additional funding for schools is needed, a larger share of the PSF should be distributed to public schools through the ASF. Necessary to clarify the General Land Office's authority to distribute revenue derived from the PSF's land and property directly to the ASF.	Unwise to spend funds that otherwise would be invested and would ensure the PSF's continued growth as a permanent revenue stream that helps fund schools and, in turn, helps keep property taxes down. Would offer a short-term solution to the budget crisis, but would harm public schools and their endowment in the long run	Increased distributions to the Available School Fund would provide support for public schools at a time when additional state funding for schools is needed.	Instead of transferring additional revenue to schools now, the revenue should be used to grow the Permanent School Fund to provide support for public schools in future years.
7 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.	Would allow El Paso voters to decide whether to create a regional parks district. Currently, 10 other counties have been granted this authority	Provides an opportunity for an additional authority to tax the residents of El Paso County during already tough economic times. City and county leaders need more information about the financing, function, and authority of the proposed parks district before the amendment is voted on	The City of El Paso's parks system is bearing the brunt of tremendous growth in the county, not only from migration but also the relocation of military families to Fort Bliss. The proposed amendment would enable the city and county to work together to develop a comprehensive regional parks system, which would not only attract development but also could leverage resources of both the city and county and operate more efficiently than either entity could on its own.	If the proposition is approved, taxpayers in the county, which is not affluent, could be subject to yet another taxing entity. Establishing a regional parks district is a quality of life issue rather than an economic development issue. Sustaining the economy is a more important focus for community leaders at this time. City and county leaders need to have more information about the exact financing, leadership, functions and authority of the proposed parks district before this constitutional amendment is presented to voters.

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8 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.	Creates incentive for landowners to partner with the state to protect water quality and increase conservation efforts. Gives landowners who already qualified for open-space valuation some flexibility to use their land to help ensure a safe and adequate water supply for the future.	Several tax breaks already exist for Texas landowners, and providing another one is excessive. Unnecessary because it duplicates existing options for landowners under wildlife management valuation. Landowners who qualify for an agriculture valuation already practice water conservation.	Water conservation is a necessity to protect our fresh water resources. Our population is expected to double by 2060, and according to the state water plan, active conservation will account for 23 percent of the state's future water supply. This proposed amendment would create another tool for managing the state's limited water resources. This provision would be revenue neutral; landowners who choose this option will pay the same amount of taxes as they did before moving to this new valuation.	Farmers and ranchers who qualify for an agricultural valuation are already practicing water conservation in order to keep their stocks and crops productive. This valuation is unnecessary because it would duplicate options that are already available under the wildlife management valuation.
9 The constitutional amendment authorizing the governor to grant a pardon to a person who successfully completes a term of deferred adjudication community supervision.	Would correct an inequity in Texas law that allows a person convicted of a crime to be eligible for a pardon while a person who successfully completes a term of deferred adjudication is not eligible. Would provide the means for a person who successfully completed deferred adjudication to receive an expunction of certain related criminal history information	State should be cautious about any policy that could result in restrictions on public access to criminal history information. Amendment is unnecessary as pardons are designed for those who have been convicted of crimes.	Proposition 9 would result in a more equitable policy on pardons and expunction of criminal records by offering the same opportunity to persons who have completed deferred adjudication as to persons who have been convicted. The governor would still have discretion about whether to grant a pardon. Even though charges are dismissed after successful adjudication, the criminal history record remains and may be a barrier in obtaining employment, housing or admission to schools.	The record of deferred adjudication accurately states that the probation was completed and the charges were dismissed. Expunction of a record of deferred adjudication would restrict public access to criminal history record information.
10 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.	Needed to address the new filing deadline imposed by SB 100, which the Legislature enacted to implement the federal MOVE Act. Without enactment, certain county and district officeholders wishing to seek another office will have to resign from their current post first.	The resign-to-run provision should be repealed altogether, not merely revised to match up with the new earlier candidate filing deadline. Candidates should not hold elected district or county positions while running for other offices.	Most candidates for elected office need to have paid employment. Proposition 10 would allow them to maintain their income while running for office, and would allow the current office to be covered with an experienced person during that time, eliminating unnecessary vacancies and the need for temporary appointments to complete the term.	Candidates should not hold elected district or county positions while running for other offices.