

MEDIA CONTACT:

Rita Miller

Community Relations Manager

RMiller@LeeClerk.org

239-533-2766

Protect your right to vote and say ‘yes’ to Amendment 10

By Linda Doggett, Lee County Clerk of Court

As Floridians head to the polls this general election, we'll be faced with several amendments on our ballots. One of the most significant is Amendment 10, also known as the Protection Amendment. It's designed to protect our right to vote, our veterans, and our public safety.

Amendment 10 ensures all constitutional officers throughout each county are directly elected by and accountable to you, the constituents. Our sheriffs, property appraisers, tax collectors, clerks of court and supervisors of elections should be elected by the people they serve – not appointed by other government officials. Floridians should have a say in who keeps our communities safe, protects our democratic voting process, and safeguards our tax dollars and public records.

Constitutional officers play vital roles in our lives. Florida's 66 elected sheriffs are responsible for a 47-year low crime rate. Our court clerks and comptrollers safeguard trillions of your court and official records as well as more than \$13 billion in public funds. Nearly \$30 billion is collected annually by tax collectors to fund our local governments, and \$9.2 billion is delivered to our children's public schools by our property appraisers. The founders of our constitution recognized these responsibilities to be so critical that they split each one into individual offices separate from county government. No entity who sets the tax rate shall also assess a property's value, collect property taxes, or manage public funds. These separations of duties are the cornerstone of our democracy and every constitutional officer should be accountable only to our citizens.

This amendment also adds the Office of Domestic Security and Counterterrorism under the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. This protects our families by providing essential support for law enforcement to respond to acts of terrorism. It's critical that we make every effort to keep Florida's 21 million residents and 116 million annual visitors safe from harm.

Most importantly, Amendment 10 protects our veterans. It ensures the governance and structure of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs supports the changing needs of Florida's 1.5 million military members and their families. Our veterans deserve to be cared for during and after their service to our country, secure from political influences.

Amendment 10 ensures Floridians remain in control. It prohibits counties from abolishing constitutional officers, ensures our veterans are supported by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, improves the state budgeting process, and takes measures to combat terrorism in our communities.

Amendment 10 makes it all possible without increasing taxes or the size of government. In fact, Florida TaxWatch, an independent, nonpartisan government watchdog for nearly four decades, fully supports Amendment 10. The organization works to improve the accountability of Florida's government.

I urge you to vote yes on Amendment 10 and protect your right to vote. To learn more about Amendment 10, please visit www.amendment10.org.