

**CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT #8:  
"Local Option Community College Funding"  
Adopted by the  
Taxation & Budget Reform Commission**

Ballot Language: "Constitutional Amendment: Article VII, section 9: Local Option Community College Funding. Proposing an amendment to the State Constitution to require that the Legislature authorize counties to levy a local option sales tax to supplement community college funding; requiring voter approval to levy the tax; providing that approved taxes will sunset after 5 years and may be reauthorized by the voters."

**Questions & Answers**

**What does the proposed Constitutional Amendment #8 state?**

Amendment #8 offers an option for communities to demonstrate support for their community colleges. It places "enabling" language in the Constitution that would allow counties to present to the voters a local option referendum to supplement funding for the local community colleges. It would be for a temporary period of time (5 years).

**Why do we need a constitutional amendment to address local county support for community colleges?**

Amendment 8 would place community colleges in the State Constitution for the very first time, thus granting these institutions constitutional standing. The Taxation & Budget Reform Commission (TBRC) comprised of respected conservative business and community leaders statewide voted overwhelmingly to adopt this constitutional amendment and place it on the ballot. They recognized the important role community colleges play in the local and state economy, providing accessible and affordable postsecondary and workforce education.

**If I vote in favor of Amendment #8, will the county be mandated to have a local option referendum placed on the ballot for our college?**

No. Amendment #8 gives the Board of Trustees the choice to pursue a local referendum or not. In subsequent years, the Board can approach the county if it so desires, and ask the County to present a referendum to the voters. Voting in favor of Amendment #8 is simply voting for "enabling" language.

**Do other states allow local governments to supplement revenues for their community colleges in addition to the state's support?**

Yes. Twenty-nine states across the country combine a mix of revenue support to their community colleges. Many of the nation's largest community college systems in New York, California, North Carolina, Texas and others receive some form of municipal or county support in addition to state funding.

**What type of local option referendum would be authorized by this Constitutional Amendment?**

The Amendment authorizes counties to place only a local option sales tax referendum on the ballot, subject to voter approval and mandated to sunset after five years. Currently, no mechanism exists that allows a county to place a referendum on the ballot for voter approval of local revenues in support of its community college.

**Why is passage of the amendment so critical for community colleges?**

Reliance on one primary source of revenue, namely State General Revenue, for the operations of one of the largest community college systems in the nation, serving more than 800,000 students, is no longer a viable solution. Economic forecasts for Florida are not optimistic. Other large states combine local with state support, and Amendment #8 would give local communities throughout Florida the opportunity to sustain a quality education at their community college.

But first the language authorizing this option in Amendment #8 has to pass statewide. Amendment #8 would allow local communities at a future date the option to show support for their community college. It would empower the voters to let their voices be heard through a local referendum.