



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FLORIDA

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## PRESS ADVISORY

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The League of Women Voters of Florida opposes SJR 4, the proposed state constitutional amendment that will be placed on the special election ballot on January 29, 2008, because it would:

- (1) Require the state legislature to limit the ability of local governments to raise revenues to meet local needs;
- (2) Extend and increase homestead tax limitations without regard to the ability of homeowners to pay; and
- (3) Worsen Florida's current infrastructure deficit and the decline in the level of state services and in our quality of life.

President Dianne Wheatley-Giliotti states that "The League of Women Voters of Florida has long held the position that local governments in Florida should have available a variety of options for generating revenues to meet local needs. SJR 4 contravenes this principle because it requires that the Legislature limit the authority of local governments to increase property taxes."

In addition, the League of Women Voters of Florida believes that property taxes in Florida should be levied based on ability to pay, and that tax relief or circuit breakers should be provided for all low-income persons who own or rent property regardless of age. By allowing current homesteaders to keep the Save Our Homes tax limitation, SJR 4 runs contrary to this principle – Save Our Homes is not based on ability to pay and has introduced a bias against more recent home buyers resulting in large inequities in the taxes they pay.

Finally, the League of Women Voters of Florida believes that our state has a present infrastructure deficit, and state service levels and our quality of life are declining. The League's position is that sufficient state taxes should be levied to reverse the decline in levels of service and improve the quality of life for all Floridians. According to the Legislature's own calculations, passage of SJR 4 will result in revenue losses of \$3.6 billion in 2008-09 and as much as \$4.4 billion by 2010. These losses are in addition to the already mandated revenue cap passed by the Legislature during the special legislative session. Over the next five years, the Legislature estimates that the loss of revenue will be \$32 billion, more than 16% of Florida's budget.

Said Fiscal Policy Chair Terry Coble, "The losses in revenue occasioned by SJR 4 would result in unconscionable cuts to our state's infrastructure and service needs at a time when revenue shortfalls are already causing the Legislature to reduce our existing state budget."