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## **Linda W. Cox: Amendment 4 would mean more job losses for Florida**

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Amendment 4, which will appear on the November ballot, would deal a catastrophic blow to Florida's economy if passed. At a time when Treasure Coast residents are still reeling from the recession, Amendment 4 threatens to derail all efforts to revive our stalled economy. Ultimately, this ill-advised amendment would raise taxes and kill jobs.

Amendment 4 requires taxpayer-funded referenda for any changes to local government comprehensive plans. This requirement leaves county and city officials with two choices: either call for costly, taxpayer-funded special elections, or delay the approval of much-needed projects until the next regularly scheduled election. In either case, the amendment would impose significant additional costs on taxpayers who are already stretched thin. The result would be a reduction in vital government services and/or an increase in taxes.

Furthermore, Amendment 4 would create an inhospitable business climate that would serve to dissuade new companies from investing in our state, and prevent existing companies from growing. Just imagine: Every land planning change will result in expensive political campaigns. Such a process would inherently favor those with the deepest pockets and turn growth management debates into a sound-bite-driven political circus.

Leading Florida economists already have pointed out that Amendment 4 will drive unemployment higher. A study conducted by The Washington Economics Group developed a "most likely" scenario should Amendment 4 pass. This scenario predicted a total loss of 267,247 Florida jobs. Construction would be hit the hardest, with 101,307 jobs lost, but Florida also would lose 92,182 jobs in the knowledge-base services. These high-paying jobs, which represent the future of Florida's economy, are crucial for the full and swift economic recovery of the Sunshine State.

As Floridians work toward a better quality of life for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren, we cannot let Amendment 4 derail those efforts. Learn more about Amendment 4's impact on our economy, and I think you'll agree, Floridians should vote no on Amendment 4!

Cox is president/CEO of the St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce.



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