

## Educate yourself about amendments on November ballot

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This November, voters will be faced with a number of tough decisions at the ballot box. Fortunately, one of the most important decisions should also be the easiest. Amendment 4, a "citizens will have to VOTE ON EVERYTHING related to land use changes, amendments, and even text corrections to existing regulations", would cause delays in the approval process that would kill jobs, raise taxes, increase costs and frequency of elections, and lead to endless litigation at taxpayer expense.

Amendment 4 has been referred to in the past as as a 'stimulus package for special interest lawyers'.

Point in fact 1: Years ago, those who are proponent's entitled it "Hometown Democracy", but its anything but..they had difficulty getting the required signatures to place it on the ballot the first attempt, but they finally succeeded by getting an extension. Now their sound bites sound good – who doesn't like "hometown decision making" or "democracy in action"?

Point in fact 2; this proposal would add costly new layers of bureaucratic red-tape to existing complicated planning processes. A few of you who read this may be involved in municipal planning, zoning, advisory boards and know your way through the process and its highly technical language, most of us don't have the time to read hundreds or thousands of pages to determine whether something is good for the community or not; and it would be virtually impossible to condense thousands of pages of technical planning data into the 75 word ballot summaries that are required by law (for each and every change to land use issues. Inevitably, disagreements – and lawsuits – would ensue (and have).

Voting for Amendment 4 encourages the special interests that lose at the ballot box to take their case to court, at taxpayer (your) expense.

Case in point: That is exactly what happened to the small town of St. Pete Beach in Pinellas County, which implemented a local version of Amendment 4 in 2006. The measure decimated their economy and created chaos at the polls. They repealed the law in 2008 and still to date, the citizens of St. Pete Beach have seen nearly a dozen lawsuits that were filed (by those who want you to vote yes on Amendment 4) during it's tenure and immediately after which have cost local taxpayers more than three-quarters of a million dollars in legal fees alone. This does not take into account the developmental delays and lack of decisions and failures in development projects.

As Florida attempts to recover from this devastating recession and the impact of the recent "Deepwater Horizon disaster", the last thing we need is Amendment 4, a proposal that would raise taxes, cost jobs, and hurt Florida's working families and small businesses. This November, VOTE NO on Amendment 4!

To learn more about how this will affect you and to better understand the impacts of this amendment is found at <http://www.florida2010.org/>

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