

# Partnership for Revising Florida's Constitution

EDUCATE, ENGAGE, EMPOWER



## **Too Important to Miss: The 2017-2018 Florida Constitution Revision Commission**

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- Florida has five ways to amend constitution
- **Constitution Revision Commission (CRC)**
  - Every 20 years
  - Puts items directly on ballot
  - 37 members
  - Will meet Summer 2017
  - Only third time in state's history

# 1968 Constitution

- “...in the tenth year following that in which this constitution is adopted, and each twentieth year thereafter, there shall be established a constitution revision commission...”

# Florida CRC

- Only constitutional commission that meets on a set schedule and **puts items directly** on the ballot for ratification

# CRC Commission Members

- **37 Members**
- **Attorney General**
- **15 appointed by Governor (appoints chair)**
- **9 appointed by House Speaker**
- **9 appointed by Senate President**
- **3 appointed by Chief Justice, Supreme Court**

# Partisanship

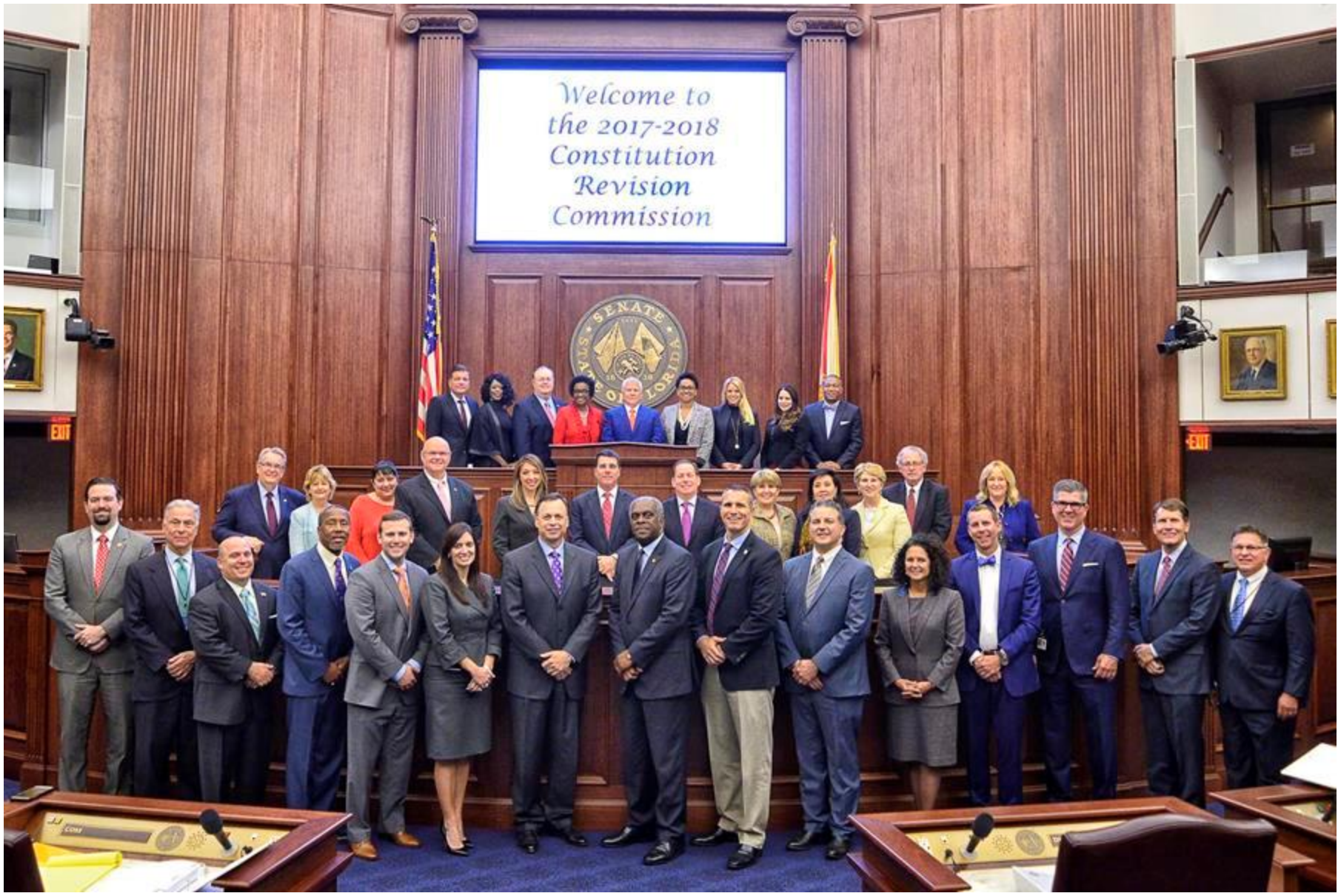
- 1977- All Democratic appointers
- 1997-Legislature Republican/Governor Democrat
- 2017—All Republican appointers

# The Commission shall:

- Adopt its rules of procedure
- Examine the constitution of the state
- Hold public hearings
- Make recommendations for revisions to go to ballot in next general election
  - Article XI, Section 2 (c) Florida Constitution



Welcome to  
the 2017-2018  
Constitution  
Revision  
Commission





# Rules of Procedure

- Decide on voting rules
- Does not have to follow APA
- Does not have to follow Open Government
- Is subject to Lobby Registration
- Is subject to ethics commission rules regarding gifts but can engage in social lobbying
- Limit of 75 words

# Examine Constitution of State

- “big picture” important
- “We need to look to the constitution’s basic principles. We must give up personal preferences in exchange for the ability to offer the people of Florida needed changes in our state’s basic structure of government?”
  - Judge Barkdull (1977)

# Hold Public Hearings

- 1977—10 public hearings--232 issues from public hearings were on their priority list
- 1997—12 public hearings--186 issues from public hearings went to committees
- 2017—scheduled four public hearings prior to adopting the rules

# 2017 Hearings

- March 29 Orange County
- April 6 Miami-Dade County
- April 7 Palm Beach County
- April 12 Leon County
- April 26 Alachua County
- April 27 Duval County
- May 3 Bay County
- May 10 Lee County

# Two sets of public hearings

- Listening tour
- After their initial recommendations (3 public hearings for each commission)

# Two Previous CRCs 1977-1978



- Chaired by Sandy D'Alemberte
- Eight proposals
- None adopted on ballot but some were implemented later

# 1977-78 Proposals

- 87 proposals in the 8 amendments
- Right to privacy (c)
- Pretrial release (s)
- Accessible polls (s)
- Public records (c)
- Public meetings (c)
- Term limits cabinet (c)
- Right to Privacy (c)



# 1978 Ballot Measures and Vote

- Omnibus proposal (56 changes) **29%**
- Declaration of rights (mini-ERA) **43%**
- Legislative Single-Member Districts and Reappointment Commission **47%**
- Executive/cabinet restructuring **25%**
- Executive Public Service Commission and Public Counsel **36%**
- Judiciary: Merit selection of trial court judges **49%**
- Finance and taxation **36%**
- Education **36%**

- “The 1978 CRC succeeded, although not as it intended. Change was gradual..”
- 40% of substantive recommendations are now law in Florida
- 20% of the procedural recommendations
- Brought issue to fore (softened up)

# 1997-98 Commission



- Chaired by Dexter Douglas
- Nine proposals placed on ballot
- Eight were successful
- Major marketing efforts to inform citizens

# 1998 Ballot Measures and Vote

- Conservation and creation of fish and wildlife conservation commission (**72%**)
- Public education (**71%**)
- Judicial selection and funding of state courts (**57%**)
- Restructuring state cabinet (**56%**)
- Basic rights (gender equality) **66%**
- Local and Municipal tax exemption/citizen access to local officials (**49.8%**)
- Ballot access, public campaign financing and election process revisions (**64%**)
- Firearms Purchases (**72%**)
- Miscellaneous matters and technical revisions (**55%**)

# Other History

- 1980, legislature proposed abolishing revision commission process; voters did not agree
- 1988, Tax Reform and Budget Commission was added

# What You Can Do





# 1. Think about what might be added to constitution



# Possible Commission Topics

- Legislative Term limits
- Primary system
- Statutory initiative process
- Ethics reform
- Redistricting commission

# Possible Commission Topics (2)

- Election of secretary of state/education commissioner
- Judicial term limits
- Revising Fair Districts Florida

## 2. Follow the Commission's Activities

--The Florida Channel

--CRC website: <http://www.flcrc.gov>

--Revise Florida website:  
<http://www.revisefl.com>



# PARTNERSHIP FOR REVISING FLORIDA'S CONSTITUTION

*Educate, Engage, Empower*

## THE CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION

 **CITIZENS' GUIDE**  **VIDEO**

 **Partnership for Revising Florida's Constitution**  
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 **Partnership for Revising Florida's Constitution**  
43 mins

More than any other political process in Florida, it is vital for the citizens to be informed, engaged and skeptical when our state's constitution is being changed

# 3. Participation

- Testify/attend hearings
- Submit ideas to the CRC via its webpage
- Write op ed pieces on your idea
- Talk to commissioners in your area
- Get local groups involved

# 3a. Participation

When commission makes decisions

- inform yourselves and your groups on these decisions
- take a position on the amendments
- VOTE and encourage everyone to do so



“We are dealing with a constitutional democracy in which sovereignty resides in the people. It is their constitution...They have a right to change, abrogate or modify it in any manner they see fit...”

– Glenn Terrell, former FL Supreme Court Justice



“Every generation of citizens has a right to choose for itself the form of government it believes most promotive of its own happiness.”

– Thomas Jefferson

Hope you agree and will work with us.



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