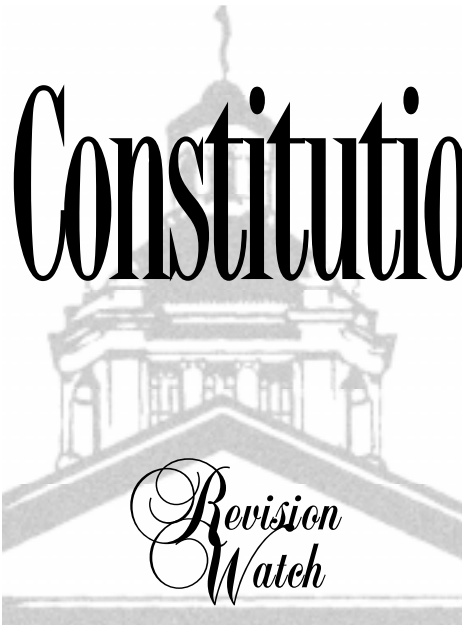


Constitution Revision Commission



A look at the monthly highlights and happenings for the Constitution Revision Commission

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

- Dexter Douglass, *Chairman*
- Carlos J. Alfonso
- Clarence E. Anthony
- Antonio L. Argiz
- Thomas H. Barkdull, Jr.
- Martha Walters Barnett
- Pat Barton
- Robert M. Brochin
- Robert A. Butterworth
- Kenneth L. Connor
- Chris Corr
- Ander Crenshaw
- Valerie W. Evans
- Marilyn Evans-Jones
- Barbara Williams Ford-Coates
- Ellen Catsman Freidin
- Paul M. Hawkes
- William Clay Henderson
- Toni Jennings
- Gerald Kogan
- Richard Langley
- John F. Lowndes
- J. Stanley Marshall
- Jacinta Mathis
- Jon Mills
- Frank Morsani
- Robert Lowry Nabors
- Carlos Planas
- Judith Byrne Riley
- Katherine Fernandez Rundle
- James A. Scott
- H.T. Smith
- Alan C. Sundberg
- James Harold Thompson
- Paul West
- Gerald T. Wetherington
- Stephen Neal Zack

Alternates:

- Ira H. Leesfield
- Lyra Blizzard Logan

Issue 7

March/April 1998



Dexter Douglass

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Throughout the Constitution Revision Commission process I have attempted to remain as neutral as possible on most issues. But when it comes to Cabinet Reform, I feel compelled to join the fray and lend my support.

It is past time for the State of Florida to change the way in which our governor

and the cabinet serve our citizens. Our current system in which the governor essentially has only a lone vote along with the six statewide elected officials on the cabinet is unique. It is also antiquated and ineffective.

Thanks to the hard work of Commissioner Jacinta Mathis and the Executive Committee chaired by Carlos Alfonso, the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

COMMISSION SENDS NINE AMENDMENTS TO BALLOT

Florida's Constitution Revision Commission has whittled more than 500 proposals down to 33 that will go on the November ballot in the form of nine amendments.

Included in those amendments to the state constitution are a wide array of proposals dealing with personal rights, gun control, elections, the environment, education and cabinet reform.

The proposed amendments will be presented to the Secretary of State on May 5 for placement on the Nov. 3 ballot.

"We've had a great day," said Constitution Revision Commission Chairman Dexter Douglass following the March 23 meeting in Tallahassee. "Most of us should be very happy for the quality of work that we've done."

Following is a summary of the nine proposed amendments that will appear on the November ballot:

Environment

- State policy to protect natural resources and scenic beauty would be expanded to call for "the conservation and protection of natural resources."

- The state could continue to sell bonds to raise money for environmental lands.
- The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and the Marine Fisheries Commission would be merged.

Education

- The state would be directed to provide an "efficient, safe, secure and high quality system of education."
- Educating children would be described as "a paramount duty of the state."

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MEMBER PROFILES

CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION



ALAN C. SUNDBERG

Appointed By: Chief Justice
Occupation: General Counsel, Florida State University
Birth Date and Place: June 23, 1933, Jacksonville
Education: LLB from Harvard University, 1958

Personal: Spouse, Betty Steffens; Children, Allison Lane, Angela Estes, Laura, Alan Jr., William
Public Service: Florida Sentencing Guidelines Commission; Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Judicial Conference of the United States; Committee on Lawyer Qualification and Conduct U.S. Court of Appeals, 11th Circuit; Florida Bench/Bar Commission, chairman; Governor's Property Rights Study Commission II, chairman; Floridians Against Constitutional Tampering, chairman; Special Commission on Contingency Fees; Alternate Dispute Resolution Commission
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PAUL WEST

Appointed By: Speaker
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GERALD T. WETHERINGTON

Appointed By: Chief Justice
Occupation: Former chief judge, Dade County
Birth Date and Place: July 14, 1937, Adel, GA
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University, 1963
Public Service: 11th Circuit Court, chief judge, 1981-91; 11th Judicial Circuit Master Plan Committee, chairman; Florida Supreme Court Committee on Standard Jury Instructions; Florida Supreme Court Committee on Judicial records, chairman; Florida 2nd and 4th District Courts of Appeal, associate judge pro tempore; Miami Beach City Manager selection committee
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STEPHEN NEAL ZACK

Appointed By: Governor
Occupation: Attorney, Zack Sparber Kosnitzky Spratt & Brooks, P.A.
Birth Date and Place: Dec. 2, 1947, Detroit, MI
Education: JD from University

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Public Service: United Way; Ounce of Prevention; President of Florida Bar; University of Florida Law School, trustee; Orange Bowl Committee; Entertainment Commission; Ethics Commission, chairman; Counsel, Gov. Bob Graham
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PAT BARTON

Alternate: June 1997-December 1997
Commissioner: January 1998-
Appointed By: President
Occupation: Retired Realtor-associate, drug-prevention and education consultant

Birth Date and Place: July 10, 1940, Evanston, IL
Education: FSU and Auburn University
Personal: Spouse, William; Children, Bret, Tracy Lyons, Berne, five grandchildren
Public service: Health and Human Services, board member and past chairman (District 8); District 8 Juvenile Justice Board, vice chairman; Florida Health and Human Services, former board member and chairman; Republican Party of Florida, public relations chairman, 1987-91; Naples Informed Parents, founding member, 1978; Florida Republican Women, 1985-89, president; YMCA of Collier County, board of directors officer, 1971-78
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JAMES HAROLD THOMPSON

Appointed By: Governor
Occupation: Attorney, Ausley & McMullen
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Education: JD from Florida

State University, 1969
Personal: Spouse, Carolyn; Children, Jason, James, Lee Anne
Public Service: Florida House of Representatives, 1974-86; Speaker of the House, 1985-86; Governor's Environmental Land Management Study Commission, chairman, 1992-93; Florida Power Plant Siting Act task force, vice chairman
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Each issue will highlight six members of the Constitution Revision Commission

A CALLING FOR EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN

It was not that long ago that women in the state of Florida and across the country did not have the right to vote. It also was not that long ago that women in our state did not have the right to equal pay, did not have the right to own property, and did not have many other rights that men have always enjoyed. Historically, women have lived in an inferior social, economic and political position.

If you read the Constitution of the state of Florida, you see that there is no express mention of the rights of women. The rights of men have traditionally derived from our Constitution. In fact, it once said that “all men” (not “men and women” or “all people”) are equal before the law. The only rights of women expressly stated in our state are those mentioned in the statutes.

It is past time for the state of Florida to explicitly recognize in its Constitution the equal rights of women, to protect and cultivate the equality of women and to require equal obligations and responsibilities of all citizens. This is a historic opportunity to begin the process to establish the constitutional rights of women.

The Constitution Revision Commission has agreed, and will give citizens of Florida the chance on Nov. 3 to ensure that females and males alike are equal before the law. If Revision 5 on the November ballot is approved, Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution will read:

“All natural persons, female and male alike, are equal before the law and have inalienable rights, among which are the right to enjoy and defend life and liberty, to pursue happiness, to be rewarded for industry, and to acquire, possess and protect property.”

Florida then will join 17 other states in putting equal rights amendments in their Constitutions.

The Constitution Revision Commission 20 years ago thought such an amendment was a sound idea. For various reasons voters rejected that amendment,



By Ellen Freidin

along with all eight others. But we have come a long way in those 20 years, and I can't imagine any controversy today about assuring equal rights for women and men.

Women in our state have made progress in the last 20 years, but remain far from equal footing with men. Women still are earning 72 cents for every dollar that men earn. Women are not adequately represented in leadership positions, in both private and public entities. Women are not found in adequate numbers in upper management of corporations, in boardrooms and in law firm partnerships. There also is a proliferation of sexual harassment and domestic violence against women.

There are, of course, a couple of common arguments against such an amendment. Commissioner Dick Langley has said that equality for women is covered in the Constitution by the words “all natural persons.” Also, Commissioner Ken Connor has argued that the amendment could pave the way for the legalization and authorization of same-sex marriages.

My response to the former argument is that the additional language in the constitution — “female and male alike”

— is a matter of emphasis, and a matter of explicit recognition of equality.

Traditionally, if we did not have the historical basis for male supremacy in our society, we probably wouldn't be dealing with this issue today. If women always had been allowed to vote, always had been allowed to make decisions for themselves and always had equal opportunities in employment, this additional clause would not be necessary.

In seeking to assure that this amendment did not create a right to same-sex marriages, the Constitution Revision Commission's Style and Drafting Committee employed the help of Ann McGinley, a professor for the Florida State University College of Law.

“From my research it appears extremely unlikely that adding sex to the list of enumerated protected classes would result in same sex marriage in Florida,” McGinley reported to the Style and Drafting Committee. “Almost half of the states' Constitutions have equal rights provisions, and only Hawaii has interpreted its equal rights provisions to permit same sex marriage. The Hawaii case is an aberration.”

Just as this amendment is not crafted to create a right to same sex marriages, it also is not intended to simply add mere verbosity to our state's most sacred document. The Constitution Revision Commission recognized its importance that in approving the amendment by a 27-7 vote.

That vote made a clear statement that the Constitution should expressly create equality for women and men in Florida. There is some legislation that protects women in our state, but that legislation is not sufficient. It is not secure. We don't know that it won't be changed some day. Equality for women is a constitutional concept whose time has come. It is time for us to recognize the need for this state to protect and cultivate equality for women and men, and to require equal obligations and responsibilities to all of our citizens.

Constitution Revision Commission drafted a proposal that will appear on the ballot for public approval in November. The proposal combines the best of many, many suggestions to bring Florida's executive branch into the 21st century, replacing the system that brought it into the 20th century. It answers the call for less government with more accountability, a theme championed by both major political parties.

Essentially, the proposal (Committee Substitute for 159, 163 and 182) calls for the following:

- It would decrease the size of the cabinet to include only the attorney general, commissioner of agriculture and a chief financial officer, who would be given the duties of the comptroller and the treasurer. In the case of a tie vote, the governor's vote would prevail.
- The State Board of Education, which currently is comprised of the governor and cabinet, would be a body appointed by the governor. That board would appoint the Commissioner of Education.
- Other offices would be dealt with by the Legislature.

Most importantly, the proposal would stabilize the administration and its affects on education by not only creating a State Board of Education with an appointed commissioner, but also by pinpointing the governor as being directly responsible for the progress of education in the state. Under this system, when a governor runs a campaign as the "Education Governor" there actually will be some accountability to his or her claims. Under the current system, the governor has no more control over the state education system than any of the six cabinet members.

All other facets of state government are burdened by the same dilution of power. It has become abundantly clear that Florida does not need seven people with power nearly equal to the governor's. Under this system, the governor is really not held accountable in the executive branch.

That's why most supporters, including

every former governor, believe this reform is many years overdue. Understand that the current cabinet system was established in the Constitution of 1885 when resurgent whites wanted powers divided among seven elected officials. They were still recovering from Reconstruction when Florida's post-Civil War governors appointed everyone to all offices.

When former Governor Reubin Askew addressed the Constitution Revision Commission last summer, he spoke to the proposed cabinet reform.

"The Governor is still the one that has the forum and is the only one that, in effect, can challenge the people," Askew said. "If you really want to have a governor lead and not just respond to what the polls say, frankly, you need to give the governor the authority of the office and then I think you will find it better than it is now. . . ."

"Why are we fearful of giving authority to the governor when the Constitution starts off by saying the supreme power is in the governor? Well, it goes downhill after that."

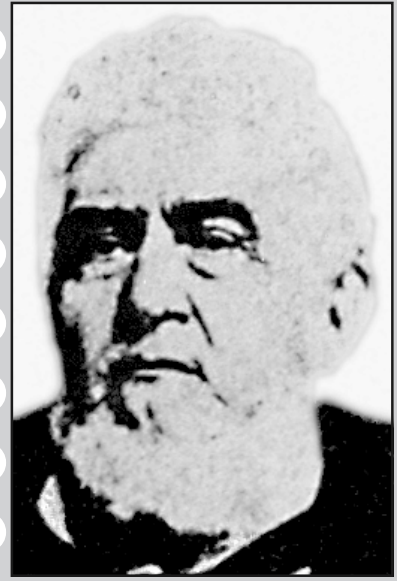
Former Governor Claude Kirk was even more emphatic.

"No unaccountable cabinet can lead to or even toward any of the freedoms that we pay for everyday. Convince yourselves and then convince our old fainthearted of the state, as well as the new and confused folks of Florida to make the governor the governor. Demand a leader to lead."

Support for this proposal extends beyond state government. Every one of our public hearings featured numerous speakers who said cabinet reform was necessary. Groups such as the Florida League of Women Voters and Common Cause have thrown their support behind the reform. And the Constitution Revision Commission appears to have endorsed the idea. In its last vote, the Commission voted 24-7 to move the proposal forward.

The timing is right not just because Florida is no longer the same state it was

REVISION SNAPSHOT



Jackson Morton

A member of Florida's first Constitution Convention. Morton represented Escambia County.

(Source: Secession Convention, photo of 1861)

when the current cabinet system was established. It also is the proper time for cabinet reform because term limits prevent those now in the cabinet from running for re-election in 2002. That's when the proposal would go into effect.

"The stars are in the right place if you're ever going to do this, because all the incumbents are not going to be affected simply because of term limits," said Democratic Insurance Commissioner Bill Nelson, who last fall joined with Republican Comptroller Bob Milligan in support of cabinet reform.

That wasn't the case in 1978 when all cabinet officers stood united against any reform and helped sway public opinion with massive financial support from their constituencies.

This time around there are many more compelling reasons that change is needed. In fact, the need to restore accountability in government is greater than ever, and cabinet reform is an excellent start toward that end.

FINAL AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA

Mark a Cross (X) in the blank space at the right FOR the Amendment or AGAINST the Amendment.

REVISION 1

Article II, s. 7(a); Article IV, s. 9;
Article VII, s. 11 (e)-(f);
Article X, s. 18; Article XII, s. 22

CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CREATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Requires adequate provision for conservation of natural resources; creates Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission granting it the regulatory and executive powers of Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and of Marine Fisheries Commission; removes exclusive legislative authority to regulate marine life and grants certain powers to new commission; authorizes revenue bonds to finance acquisition and improvement of lands for conservation, outdoor recreation, and related purposes; restricts disposition of state lands designated for conservation purposes.

FOR	
AGAINST	

REVISION 2

Article IX, s. 1

PUBLIC EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

Declares the education of children to be a fundamental value of the people of Florida; establishes adequate provision for education as a paramount duty of the state; and provides for the adequate provision for a uniform system of free public education as an efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system.

FOR	
AGAINST	

REVISION 3

Article V, ss. 10, 11(a)-(b), 12(a), (f), 14;
Article XII, s. 22

SELECTION OF JUDGES AND FUNDING OF STATE COURTS

Provides for future local elections to either retain current election of circuit and county judges or to choose merit selection by appointment and retention by vote to retain or not; provides for election procedure for subsequent changes to selection of judges; increases county judges' terms to six years; corrects judicial qualifications commission term of office; allocates state court system funding among state, counties, and users of the courts.

FOR	
AGAINST	

REVISION 4

Article II, s. 8(h), Article III ss. 8(b), 16(b) and (f), 19(f), Article IV, ss. 3(b), 4, 7(a), and 8, Article VIII, s. 1(I), Article IX, s. 2, Article XI, ss. 2(c), 3, 4, 5(a), and 6(e), and Article XII, s. 9(c), Fla. Const. and create s. 22, Article XII, Fla. Const.; providing for membership of the Florida Cabinet.

RESTRUCTURING THE STATE CABINET

Restructures elected cabinet membership as attorney general, agriculture commission, chief financial officer; eliminates offices of elected secretary of state, comptroller, treasurer, and education commissioner; combines duties of comptroller and treasurer into new chief financial officer; in voting ties, governor prevails; changes state board of education from governor and cabinet to board appointed by governor, which appoints education commissioner; defines state board of administration, trustees of internal improvement trust fund, and land acquisition trust fund.

FOR	
AGAINST	

REVISION 5

Article IV, s. 5(a); Article VI, ss. 1, 2, 5, 7;
Article IX, s. 4(a)

BALLOT ACCESS, PUBLIC CAMPAIGN FINANCING, AND ELECTION PROCESS REVISIONS

Provides that requirements for independents and minor party candidates cannot be greater than those for majority party candidates; allows all registered voters, regardless of party, to vote in any party's primary election where the winner will have no general election opposition; provides public financing of campaigns for statewide candidates who agree to campaign spending limits; permits candidates for governor to run in primary elections without lieutenant governor; makes school board election nonpartisan; corrects voting age.

FOR	
AGAINST	

REVISION 6

Article VII, s. 3, Article VIII, s. 7

LOCAL AND MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS AND CITIZEN ACCESS TO LOCAL OFFICIALS

Broadens tax exemption for governmental uses of municipal property; authorizes legislature to exempt certain municipal and special district property used for airport, seaport, or public purposes; permits local option tax exemption for property used for conservation purposes; permits local option tangible personal property tax exemption for attachments to mobile homes and certain residential rental furnishings; and allows citizens to talk with local government officials about matters which are the subject of public hearings.

FOR	
AGAINST	

REVISION 7

Article VIII, s. 5

FIREARMS PURCHASES: LOCAL OPTION FOR WAITING PERIOD AND CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK

Authorizes each county the option of requiring a criminal history records check and waiting period of 3 to 5 days in connection with the "sale" of any firearm; defines "sale" as the transfer of money or other valuable consideration for a firearm where any part of the transaction occurs on property open to public access; does not apply to holders of a concealed weapons permit when purchasing a firearm.

FOR	
AGAINST	

REVISION 8

Article I, s. 2

BASIC RIGHTS

States that females and males alike are equal before the law and that no person shall be deprived of any right because of national origin; and changes "physical handicap" to "physical disability" as a reason persons are protected from being deprived of any right.

FOR	
AGAINST	

REVISION 9

Article I, ss. 4, 16(a), 18, 23;
 Article II, ss. 5(b), 8(g)-(I);
 Article III, ss. 3(f), 8(a)-(b), 17(b)-(c), 18, 19(d);
 Article IV, ss. 1(a) and (c), 2, 3(b), 4(e), 7(a);
 Article V, ss. 1, 2(a) and (b), 3(a), 8, 10(a), 11(c), 17, 18,

20(c)(6) and (9), 20(d)(8), 20(e)(1);
 Article VII, s. 6(b); Article IX, s. 5;
 Article X, ss. 3 and 4(a);
 Article XI, ss. 2 and 6

CLARIFYING, CONFORMING, CORRECTING, AND TECHNICAL REVISIONS

Removes gender-specific references; allows courts martial to impose prison sentences; moves ethics code provision; specifies time for veto message consideration; clarifies legislature gives officials general appropriations bills 72 hours before final passage; allows direct appeal of courts martial to specified state court and advisory opinions from federal military courts; requires earlier constitution revision commission appointments; changes tax and budget reform commission voting procedures and meetings from every 10 to every 20 years.

FOR	
AGAINST	

COMMISSION SENDS NINE AMENDMENTS TO BALLOT CONT FROM PG 1

Courts

- Citizens could vote to have trial judges in their judicial circuit be appointed by the governor rather than elected.
- The cost of Florida's \$1 billion-plus court system would be split differently between state and county taxpayers.

Cabinet Reform

- The independently elected Cabinet would shrink from six officials to three: the attorney general, the agricultural commissioner and the chief fiscal officer, which would combine the current positions of treasurer and comptroller.

Basic Rights

- The guarantee of equality given to all natural persons would be expanded to spell out "all natural persons, female and male alike."
- National origin would join race, religion and physical handicap as the list of groups that are specifically protected from discrimination.

Taxes

- Local governments could give property owners tax breaks for conservation purposes.
- Local governments could approve exemptions for tangible property tax on mobile home attachments.

Elections

- The state would be required to have public campaign financing.
- The state would be barred from making it difficult for minor parties, such as the Libertarian Party and the Reform Party, to get their candidates on the ballot.
- Primary elections would be opened to all voters if the candidate in that party faces no opposition in the general election.
- All school districts could decide to make elections for school boards non-partisan.

Gun Control

- Counties could increase the statewide three-day waiting period for handgun purchases another two days and extend it to all firearm purchases. Counties could also extend gun control regulations to gun shows, which are exempt under state law.

Technical Revisions

- A tax and budget reform commission would be retained but meet every 20 years rather than every 10 years, and give it the power to put amendments on the ballot by a super-majority vote.
- The Constitution would be revised by adopting gender-neutral language.

CITIZEN'S GUIDE

The Collins Center for Public Policy has published a guide relating to the Constitution revision process. The guide is published on the Commission's homepage or is available from the Collins Center at 850/ 644-1441.

ON THE NET: COMMISSION IN CYBERSPACE

We are pleased that the web page has been so widely utilized (approximately 15,000 visitors since October 1996) and we hope to continue to add features that are of use to the public.



New to the Internet homepage:

- Meeting Summaries
- High School Lesson Plan
- Public Proposals
- Commission Members
- Student Materials

THE COMMISSION CAN BE REACHED BY:

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CONSTITUTION REVISION COMMISSION
IN THE NEWS...



Cabinet reform is an important revision on the Constitution Revision Commission's plate. Florida's elected Cabinet is a relic of a time when executive authority was limited and the citizen Legislature was expected to hold the balance of power. That division of power is no longer viable.

A strong executive who has the tools to manage the complex administration of the state is the modern model most states follow. Florida hasn't moved to that structure primarily because powerful corporate interests covet their privileged place at the table when they help elect such Cabinet members as the commissioners of banking, insurance and agriculture.

However, this is the direction Florida should be moving. If we expect to hold our governor responsible for the management and administration of the state, we have to give him the power to direct its path.

The CRC has the opportunity to make some needed fixes to our state structure. The CRC is not an elective body and is not beholden to any special interest of constituency. That means it should have built-in backbone to do what's right as opposed to what's politically expedient.

**St. Petersburg Times
February 22, 1998**

Florida's Constitution Revision Commission is wrongly closing its eyes and ears to essential reforms that would give more "power to the people."

Members unwisely decided (Feb. 11) not even to consider proposals to let voters write state laws as well as state constitutional amendments through the "citizen initiative" process.

Those reforms are vital to stop misguided efforts to clog Florida's Constitution with measures that rightly belong in state laws or regulations. . .

In theory, citizen initiative can be a powerful tool to let voters jump-start government reforms, a healthy safety valve for public dissent and a check and balance on unresponsive lawmakers. In practice, the process, is overused, corrupted and lacks adequate safeguards.

Commission members should remember their opposition and adopt carefully crafted citizen initiative reforms before they make their final recommendations on May 5.

Whatever the commission does, lawmakers should agree to print brochures at state expense to explain

and discuss pros, cons, costs and other impacts of proposed amendments placed on the ballot by any means. Uninformed voters cannot cast meaningful ballots.

**Orlando Sun-Sentinel
February 15, 1998**

Seven years ago, Floridians voted overwhelmingly to require a waiting period and criminal background check for handgun purchases. Today, guns are still being sold recklessly — without background checks or waiting periods — on property owned and maintained by taxpayers. In civic centers, school gymnasiums, fairgrounds, county convention centers and other public buildings throughout Florida, gun shows have become arms bazaars where guns are sold on a cash-and-carry, no-questions-asked basis.

Criminals and the profitable companies that organize gun shows exploit a loophole in Florida's gun laws, which allow private individuals to sell handguns without a waiting period or background check on the purchaser. This lack of regulation provides a haven for illegitimate gun dealers and felons to conduct their unsavory and dangerous business. . . .

Unfortunately, local governments are currently powerless to protect communities from these gun flea markets. . . .

The good news is that efforts are under way to empower local leaders to fight gun violence in their communities and help reduce illegal gun trafficking out of state. Florida's Constitution Revision Commission is considering a proposal by Metro-Dade State Attorney Katherine Rundle to return power to local governments. CRC 167 would allow city and county officials to pass laws that cater to the needs of individual communities, including requiring background checks and waiting periods

for all guns purchased on public property, where most gun shows take place.

CRC members should support this important proposal and let the people of Florida decide what is best for their own communities.

**James Brady
Handgun Control, Inc.
For the Florida Times Union
February 4, 1998**

When I spoke with (Marion) Hammer she said her members have been in a fury since the Constitution Revision Commission earlier had voted overwhelmingly to recommend an amendment that strikes terror into the hearts of many gun-owners.

That provision, which would have to be approved in final form later this month before being submitted to voters this November, would empower local governments to go beyond state law in adopting gun controls, although gun ownership couldn't be banned. It would effectively nullify an NRA-backed law rammed through the Florida Legislature a decade ago that barred counties and cities from being tougher on guns than the state as a whole.

To most of us, it may seem reasonable, even laudable, to have a constitutional amendment empowering the government closest to the people to determine the laws affecting those people. As situations change from place to place, common sense suggests that laws should change too.

Clearly that seems the case with guns. Of the 2,059 people killed by firearms in 1996, according to the Florida Department of Health, 1,113 lived in just seven of the state's 67 counties. Of victims under the age of 24 killed that year, 81 percent lived in those seven urban counties. . . .

Number like that scare the gun lobby, which sees tougher laws as threats to the gun business (never mind the mayhem they cause to the community).

Which is why (National Rifle Association President) Marion Hammer and all the forces that the NRA and its allies can muster are gearing for political combat. If they can't stop the proposed amendment before the commission, she said her organization is prepared to fight through the summer and into the fall to see it rejected on the Nov. 3 ballot.

Forget the governor's race.

Says Hammer: "This could become the major issue of the '98 election. It will certainly draw a lot of conservatives to the polls."

**Tom Fiedler
Miami Herald
February 15, 1998**

Constitution Revision Commission

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Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

YEAR	EVENT	AUTHORITY
1998 May 5 November 3	Proposals transmitted to Secretary of State Election Day	