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Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners, Town of Cinco Bayou, City of Crestview, City of Fort Walton Beach, City of Laurel Hill, City of Mary Esther, City of Niceville, Town of Shalimar, City of Valparaiso

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Okaloosa County and Municipalities Collaborate on Property Tax Education Effort

Okaloosa County, Florida – Okaloosa County and municipal public information staff members within the County will be distributing information in the coming weeks about the upcoming property tax ballot measure known as Amendment 3.

On June 2, 2026, the Florida Senate and the Florida House of Representatives jointly approved [House Joint Resolution 1-F](#), Save Our Homes from Excessive Property Taxes, for placement on the November 3, 2026, ballot. This proposed constitutional amendment would increase the homestead exemption for primary residences to \$150,000 in 2027 and \$250,000 in 2028. School district taxes would not be subject to the increased exemption.

The purpose of the joint public information effort is to provide comprehensive resources and information to the public on how property taxes are spent, why the funds are collected and invested locally, and how it impacts necessary services like public safety and infrastructure improvements.

The information will be distributed via a website, social media and in-person speaking engagements with the public. The website will compile information from multiple sources into one location for easy access. The website can be accessed at <https://myokaloosa.com/okaloosapropertytax>.

Officials from the Board of County Commissioners and the municipalities are encouraging residents to review all information compiled from this educational effort to ensure voters are sufficiently informed before they enter their polling place.

Voter information, including voter registration and ballots, can be found on the Supervisor of Elections website at <https://www.voteokaloosa.gov/>.

Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners

“Having all of the necessary information ahead of the upcoming election is important for all voters,” said Okaloosa County Administrator John Hofstad. “We are going through our annual budget approval process right now and welcome more community engagement at our upcoming budget workshop meetings.”

Town of Cinco Bayou

"In my personal opinion, although we are told we live in the 'free state of Florida' as mayor of a small municipality, I know that vital services are not free," said Jean Hood, Mayor of the Town of Cinco Bayou. "While eliminating property taxes sounds like a positive thing, how will we pay for the services that are funded by these taxes? Our police and fire departments are funded by property taxes, as well as libraries, park maintenance, and road repairs, as well as other critical services. I hope citizens will carefully consider the degradation of the quality of life in Florida if this proposed constitutional amendment passes. I'm personally concerned that no one in Tallahassee can answer simple questions regarding the impact of this hastily considered plan. I believe the people of Florida deserve honesty and transparency when we ask how we will continue to provide vital services to citizens in our communities. The old saying 'freedom isn't free' pertains to our quality of life in this state also."

City of Niceville

"If approved by 60 percent of Florida voters, this amendment could have far-reaching consequences for local governments and the services residents rely on every day," said Dan Henkel, Mayor of the City of Niceville. "In my opinion, the proposal represents a significant challenge to Florida's tradition of Home Rule, which grants municipalities and counties the authority to govern local affairs and make decisions that best serve their communities."

City of Crestview

"An informed community is an empowered community," said Crestview Mayor JB Whitten. "It is important that residents understand the relationship between tax revenue and the services they have come to expect from their local government."

City of Fort Walton Beach

"This topic is a tough sell to anyone struggling with bills in any capacity- a tax break sounds like the ultimate answer," said Fort Walton Beach City Manager Jason Davis. "For most of the state, the budget impact to local government operations will have substantial negative impacts, with at least two cities losing 100% of their funding. Discussions statewide on how to address the shortfall include millage increases, a new tax of sorts, eliminating services, or some combination thereof. This voting season is the time to become active in your local government so you can see what elected officials are considering for your respective area. Should this property tax approach be implemented, you could potentially wake up to a whole new taxing strategy or services you enjoy being eliminated. Educate yourself, get invested in your community, and vote with a full understanding of the impact."

City of Mary Esther

"Property taxes fund everyday services in our community, like stormwater management that helps protect streets and homes from flooding," said Jared Cobb, City of Mary Esther City Manager. "We want to give residents clear, factual information, and I'd encourage anyone interested to participate in our annual budget process."

Town of Shalimar

"Every dollar in property taxes goes to work right here in Shalimar, funding the services our residents see and depend on every single day," said Town of Shalimar Mayor Mark Franks. "Eliminating them does not eliminate the cost. It simply shifts it, which is exactly why it is up to us to help residents understand what their property tax dollars fund, and what is at stake. Local cities, towns and villages across Florida provide the level of government closest to the people. Educating residents about the connection between what they pay and what they receive is important to ensure they can make an informed decision at the ballot box."

City of Valparaiso

"The City of Valparaiso is not unlike many of the cities throughout Florida, small in size, and small in budget, but also generally self-sufficient," said Valparaiso Mayor Joe Morgan.

"This proposal raises significant concerns. The simple fact is that the bills for the services provided 'will have to be paid somehow'. A robust and full discussion on how that critical revenue stream is to be replaced and/or supplemented is needed. Many of the alternatives and options provided generally raise the cost for the most disadvantaged, our military residents, and those on fixed incomes- vis-à-vis higher rents, transferred and increased fees, etc," said Mayor Morgan.