

SAVE OUR TAXPAYERS - PROPERTY TAX RELIEF MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED EQUITABLY

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INTRODUCTION

Property tax levies have been rising rapidly in Florida, increasing by nearly 40 percent in just the last three years and more than doubling in the last ten years. Property taxes now total \$59.2 billion (FY2025-26).¹ This rise is nearly twice as fast as the combined growth of population and inflation. Spending by some county and municipal governments is also surging.²

With the Legislature's increased focus on affordability, especially housing affordability, property taxes will be a top issue during the 2026 legislative session. There is considerable support for providing significant property tax relief, and there are some that want to go way beyond that, including eliminating taxes on homestead property or even ending all property taxes.

The growth in local government taxing and spending shows that property tax relief is justified. There are many proposals but there is no consensus. This report examines the tax relief proposals released by the House of Representatives and highlights factors the Legislature must consider in their deliberations this session. This report also illustrates how Florida's current property tax system creates inequities and how tax relief that is only granted to some will shift tax burden to other taxpayers. Property tax relief is needed but so are measures that can help level the playing field for all Florida taxpayers. Florida TaxWatch is offering recommendations on how to best provide property tax relief and address some of the inequities the current system produces.

A BRIEF PRIMER ON PROPERTY TAXES

The terms “ad valorem tax” and “property tax” are interchangeable. The ad valorem tax is a local tax—the Florida Constitution prohibits state government from taxing real and tangible personal property.³ Property taxes provide over \$59 billion (FY2025-26) for counties, municipalities, school districts, and certain special districts. They are the largest revenue source for city and county general funds and can be used for any valid public purpose. While a very important revenue source, reliance on property taxes varies considerably among local governments. Common services funded by property taxes include law enforcement, fire protection, emergency management, road maintenance, parks and recreation and public health. Property taxes provide roughly half (46 percent) of the funding for the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), the main funding mechanism for public schools in Florida. This percentage varies considerably among school districts, ranging from 11.1 percent to 82.4 percent.⁴

Property taxes are based on the just value (fair market value) of property as determined by county property appraisers on January 1 of each year. Annual increases in homestead property assessed values are limited by the Save Our Homes (SOH) amendment to the lesser of inflation or three percent. Non-homestead property assessment increases are limited to ten percent annually.

Homestead property—the permanent, primary home of a Florida resident—is also granted two homestead exemptions. The original homestead exemption exempts the first \$25,000 of the home's assessed value from all tax levies, including school districts. In 2008, Florida voters approved a second \$25,000 homestead exemption⁵ that exempts the appraised value between \$50,000 and \$75,000. This exemption does not apply to taxes levied by the school district. Full property taxes are paid on the appraised value between \$25,000 and \$50,000 and the value over \$75,000 (after adjusting for inflation). Deducting exemptions from assessed value determines the taxable value upon

¹ Florida Department of Revenue, Florida Ad Valorem Valuation and Tax Data Book, multiple editions.

² Florida TaxWatch, How Florida Counties Compare, November 2025.

³ Article VII, Section 1(a), Florida Constitution

⁴ Florida Education Association, A Local Look at Property Taxes, August 21, 2025. <https://feaweb.org/eadvocate/a-local-look-at-property-taxes/>

⁵ This exemption is indexed to inflation and is now \$25,722 for Tax Year 2025.

which property tax rates (millage rates) apply. Each year, all local governing boards calculate millage rates to generate the property tax revenue needed to fund their annual budgets. It is the millage rates governments adopt that ultimately determine someone's tax bill. One mill equals \$1 of tax per \$1,000 of taxable value. The current statewide average millage rate is 16.47 mills.

Property Taxes 101

- “Ad valorem” = property tax (local tax; state can't tax real/tangible personal property).
- Generates \$55B+ (2025) for counties, cities, school districts, and some special districts.
- Funds basics: public safety, fire/EMS, roads, emergency management, parks, public health.
- Schools: property taxes supply about 46% of FEFP, but districts range from 11.1% to 82.4%.
- Your tax bill is driven by taxable value + millage rate (set annually by local boards).
- 1 mill = \$1 per \$1,000 of taxable value; statewide average: 16.47 mills.

PROPERTY TAXES ARE SKYROCKETING AND THE TAX BURDEN IS SHIFTING

Property tax levies, fueled by rising property values, are increasing rapidly in Florida. They have more than doubled in the last ten years, growing from \$28.2 billion to \$59.2 billion. Growth has accelerated recently—50 percent in the last four years, including double-digit growth in FY2022-23 (13.1 percent) and FY2023-24 (13.5 percent).⁶ However, Save Our Homes has shielded many homeowners from much of this increase.

This is because property tax exemptions and assessment caps that benefit only some properties are not really tax cuts as much as tax shifts. Florida TaxWatch research has often highlighted the inequities Florida's property tax system creates. The system favors long-term homestead property at the expense of non-homestead property (e.g., renters, businesses, second homes), homesteaders that renovate or build an addition to their home, people moving to Florida, and first-time homeowners.

History has shown that despite the many property tax relief measures that have been passed in Florida, total property taxes collected in the state do not decrease. The only time (at least for the last 50 years) that property taxes fell year-over-year from was FY2007-08 to FY2012-13,⁷ when the sub-prime mortgage crisis and the bursting of the housing bubble led to the Great Recession, which in turn led to significant drops in property values. Tax relief has not resulted in reduced total local government revenue or the total property taxes paid by all Floridians

The reason total property tax revenue does not decrease is the millage rates adopted by local governments. In recent years, local governments have not often increased their millage rates. This is because they do not have to. On average, only 14 percent of governing bodies adopt a millage rate increase from the prior year. Most (52 percent) keep the same rate and 34 percent decrease the rate.⁸ In fact, the average statewide millage rate has decreased every year since 2015.⁹ Preliminary estimates, however, predict an increase for FY2025-26.¹⁰

⁶ Florida Department of Revenue, Florida Ad Valorem Valuation and Tax Data Book, multiple editions.

⁷ Florida Revenue Estimating Conference, 2024 Florida Tax Handbook.

⁸ Office of Economic and Demographic Research, results of the Revenue Estimating Impact Conference, HB 215, page 42, November 7, 2025.

⁹ Florida Revenue Estimating Conference, 2024 Florida Tax Handbook.

¹⁰ Office of Economic and Demographic Research, results of the Revenue Estimating Impact Conference, October 31 and November 7, 2025.

Despite slightly reduced millage rates, local government property tax collections continue to increase. This is due in part to Florida's rapid growth, but it is also because property values experience sizable increases almost every year, and local governments seldom adopt the "rolled-back rate," which is the rate that would raise the same amount of property tax revenue as the prior year when applied to the taxable value of the new tax roll, minus new construction.¹¹ The requirements for local governments to calculate the rolled-back rate is part of the Truth in Millage (TRIM) law, created by the Legislature in 1980 to increase transparency in property tax and budget deliberations and help protect taxpayers from over taxation due to rising property values.¹² The law considers any millage rate higher than the rolled-back rate to be a tax increase and requires local governments to portray it as one. An average of five counties, out of 67, have adopted the rolled-back (or lower) millage rate over the last five years.¹³ That means an average of 62 counties adopted a tax increase.

The table in Appendix D shows the tax raising power of rising property values and how reduced millage rates are usually not tax cuts. The average statewide millage rate has been reduced by 10.9 percent over the last ten years. But taxable values grew by 131.5 percent, leading to tax levies more than doubling (108.1 percent).

Save Our Homes and the 2008 homestead exemption have shown that when you reduce taxable value on one segment of property owners, the total tax burden is shifted to other property owners. This is especially true during times of strong home value growth, such as the housing bubble. From 2000 to 2007, the average homestead tax bill (if the homeowner was under SOH the whole time) fell by 1.1 percent. However, the average non-homestead tax bill more than doubled, increasing 116 percent. Tax growth was even higher for just non-homestead residential—151 percent,

which put considerable strain on rental property and rents. This means that the growth in total property taxes levies from \$14.3 billion in 2000 to \$30.4 billion in 2007 was borne almost entirely by property that did not qualify for SOH or, to a lesser degree, those homeowners that only had SOH protection for a short time during this period.¹⁴

The ten percent non-homestead assessment cap, created by the voters in 2008, is simply too high to do much about the tax shift to non-homestead property. One of the reasons is the non-homestead cap only applies to non-school levies, which is only 60 percent of the average tax bill. Also, although both caps have a recapture¹⁵ provision, recapture makes it especially hard to build up a differential under the higher ten percent cap. Furthermore, there is no portability, so businesses that relocate are assessed at the new property's full value. Higher taxes on new construction and relocations could have a negative effect on commercial real estate and significantly different tax bills for similarly situated businesses, raising competitive concerns. Higher taxes on rental property increase rents as they are passed on by the landlord.

The Save Our Home cap now shields \$933 billion of the value of homestead property from taxation. This is worth \$15.4 billion in property taxes. This compares to \$269 billion exempt by the non-homestead ten percent cap (see Figure 1). This is worth \$4.4 billion in taxes.¹⁶ In addition, the differential¹⁷ produced by SOH is forecast to increase annually through at least 2030, while the non-homestead differential is expected to continue decreasing every year. This is because homestead values are rising faster than non-homestead values.¹⁸ This means the amount of taxes shifted will continue to increase.

11 In developing its budget, each local government must calculate the millage rate necessary to raise the same amount of property tax revenue as the prior year when applied to the taxable value of the new tax roll, minus new construction and other allowances. This rate was intended to protect taxpayers from large tax increases from rising property values, while still allowing some growth for local government revenue. If a local government is proposing a property tax rate in excess of the rolled-back rate, such rate must be characterized as a tax increase in the authorizing resolution or ordinance and in the advertisement required prior to adoption of a final millage rate and budget.

12 Section 200.65, *Florida Statutes*.

13 Florida Department of Revenue, *County Compliance with Maximum Millage Levy Calculation 2020-2024*

14 Florida TaxWatch, 2018 Florida Voter Guide to Florida's Constitutional Amendments, October 4, 2018.

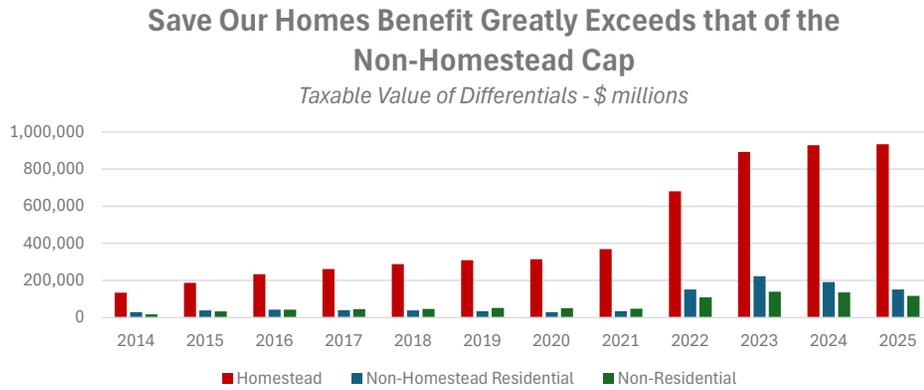
15 The recapture rule provides that even if a property's just value decreases, its assessment will increase by the cap as long as the assessment does not exceed just value.

16 Florida Ad Valorem Estimating Conference, Pre-Conference Package, March 5, 2025.

17 The difference between a property's assessed value and the just (market) value.

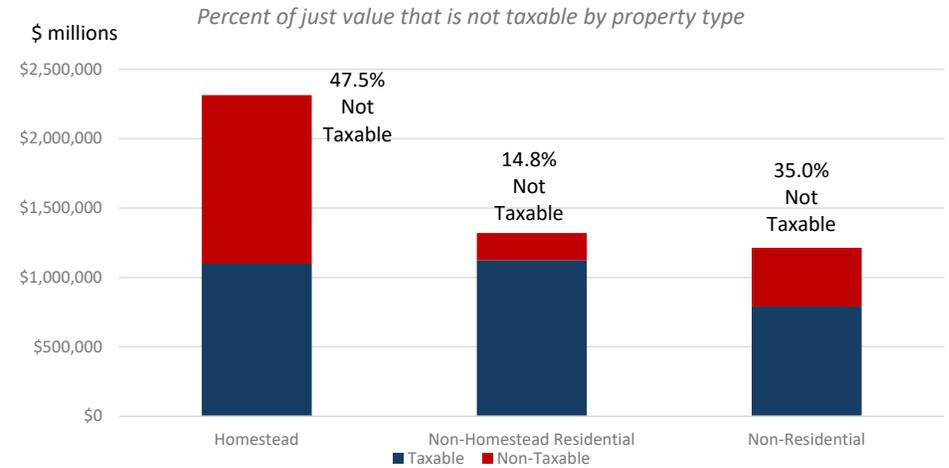
18 Florida Ad Valorem Estimating Conference, Pre-Conference Package, March 5, 2025.

FIGURE 1.
SAVE OUR HOMES BENEFIT GREATLY EXCEEDS THAT OF THE NON-HOMESTEAD CAP



The two homestead exemptions shield another \$248 billion of homestead taxable value. When all exemptions and assessment limitations are considered, homestead property is taxed at less than half (47 percent) of its just value, while non-homestead property is taxed at 80 percent (see Figure 2). Exemptions put upward pressure on millage rates, and properties with fewer exemptions or higher assessment caps bear the brunt of those tax increases.

FIGURE 2.
ALMOST HALF OF HOMESTEAD PROPERTY VALUE IS NOT TAXED



Florida TaxWatch understands that if the 2026 Legislature can agree on a proposed property tax relief constitutional amendment, it will likely focus on homestead property relief. If the Legislature puts an additional large homestead exemption on the ballot, or any exemption that benefits one class of property, it should also require that local governments adopt the rolled-back rate after adding back any taxable value lost to the new exemption. This should be required for at least two years. This not only ensures that tax burden is not shifted to other properties, but also that taxpayers receive the full value of the exemption that the Legislature (and voters) expected. If some taxpayers get reduced taxes, and tax revenues do not decrease, that means someone else is paying for it.



WHAT WOULD PROPERTY TAX RELIEF COMING BEFORE THE VOTERS IN 2026 LOOK LIKE?

While the Governor and many in the Legislature want to bring a property tax relief proposal to the voters in 2026, they are far from a consensus of what that proposal will look like.

Towards the end of the 2025 legislative session, Governor Desantis announced he wanted to give homeowners a major break on their property taxes and then work to eliminate them entirely. He says Floridians can never truly own their home as long as they have to pay “rent” to the government to keep it. The Governor proposed an idea to, in the short term, provide all homestead property owners with a \$1,000 rebate check, with state funds paying the more than \$5 billion cost.¹⁹

The Legislature did not embrace this plan but did pass a tax package to provide significant state tax relief. The House instead created a Select Committee on Property Taxes to examine the issue over the summer, with the goal of producing property tax relief proposals for the 2026 Legislature to consider. In October, Speaker Perez released seven proposed constitutional amendments and one bill, ranging from total elimination of homestead taxes to relatively small exemptions.²⁰ The Governor dismissed the proposals as not being “serious.” The Senate, which has voiced support for property tax relief, has largely been silent on its preferred approach.

EXAMINING THE HOUSE TAX RELIEF PROPOSALS

The Florida House of Representatives has filed seven proposed constitutional amendments and one statutory change. Since these proposals would be on the November 2026 ballot, they would not take effect until January 1, 2027. These property assessments will fund the 2027-28 local government fiscal year (October 1, 2027 to September 30, 2028).

COMMON ELEMENTS

- All proposed constitutional amendments would only apply to non-school taxes, which make up approximately 61 percent of the average tax bill. Non-school taxes are those levied by cities, counties, and special districts.
- Local public safety spending would be held harmless. Cities and counties would be prohibited from spending less on public safety than they did in the base year, which would be set at FY2025-26 or FY2026-27, whichever had the higher funding level for public safety.

HJR 201 - ELIMINATION OF NON-SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX FOR HOMESTEADS

This proposal would eliminate all non-school taxes for homestead property only, beginning in tax year 2027 (FY2027-28). This would be done by replacing the second homestead exemption (currently \$25,722 and applying only to non-school taxes) with the total exemption of non-school taxes on homesteads. The first homestead exemption would remain, maintaining the \$25,000 exemption from school taxes for homesteads.

Fiscal Impact²¹ – If approved by the voters, the amendment would save taxpayers/reduce local government revenue by \$14.1 billion in 2027-28, growing to \$18.3 billion in FY2031-32. The first-year impact would range from \$1.8 million in Union County to \$2.25 billion in Miami-Dade County.

¹⁹ There are 5.2 million homestead parcels in Florida.

²⁰ Florida House of Representatives, Office of the Speaker, Memorandum – Property Taxes, October 16, 2025.

²¹ Except as noted, all fiscal impact estimates come from the Office of Economic and Demographic Research, results of the Revenue Estimating Impact Conference, October 31 and November 7, 2025.

HJR 203 – PHASE OUT NON-SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX FOR HOMESTEADS

This proposal would also eliminate non-school property taxes for homestead properties, but they would be phased out over ten years, beginning in FY2027-28. This would be done by increasing the inflation-adjusted second homestead exemption by \$100,000 each year. The exemption would be set at 100 percent of the assessed value beginning in 2037.

Fiscal Impact – If approved by the voters, the amendment would save taxpayers/reduce local government revenue by \$4.4 billion in FY2027-28, growing to \$13.3 billion in FY2031-32.

HJR 205 - ELIMINATION OF NON-SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX ON HOMESTEADS FOR SENIORS

This proposal would provide a total exemption for all homestead owners aged 65 or older, beginning in 2027, regardless of income, property value, or length of residency.

The two current senior exemptions would be repealed. The adoption of these current amendments is at the discretion of cities and counties and have requirements that seniors must meet to qualify. There is an exemption of up to \$50,000 for homeowners that are at least 65 years old and have a household income less than \$37,694 (adjusted by inflation). Seniors may receive a total property tax exemption if their home is valued at no more than \$250,000 (in the year they first received the exemption), have lived in the home for at least 25 years and have a household income less than \$37,694 (adjusted for inflation). Almost all counties offer at least one of these exemptions.

Fiscal Impact - If approved by the voters, the amendment would save taxpayers/reduce local government revenue by \$5.1 billion in FY2027-28, growing to \$6.7 billion in FY2031-32. This is in addition to the value of the current exemptions.

HJR 207 - 25 PERCENT HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION FOR NON-SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX

This proposal would provide a new homestead exemption that would be equal to 25 percent of a home's value after applying the two current homestead exemptions. The second homestead exemption would continue to be increased by the change in the Consumer Price Index, the new 25 percent exemption would not.

Fiscal Impact - If approved by the voters, the amendment would save taxpayers/reduce local government revenue by \$3.5 billion in FY2027-28, growing to \$4.3 billion in FY2031-32. The savings for a median valued home in Florida of \$425,000, would be \$4,449.²²

HJR 209 - PROPERTY INSURANCE HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION OF NON-SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX

This proposal would create an alternate 2nd homestead exemption of \$225,000 if the homeowner has a comprehensive multi-peril property insurance policy. The new exemption would be on the assessed value between \$25,000 and \$250,000. The original \$25,000 homestead exemption on all tax levies would remain. The new exemption would be adjusted for inflation. Homesteaders without an insurance policy would still be entitled to the current homestead exemptions (the first \$25,000 for all levies and the amount between \$50,000 and \$75,000 for non-school levies.) The Impact Conference assumed 16.9 percent of homesteads are not insured and “that it would be individuals with lower wealth (that cannot afford insurance) and higher wealth (that can afford to self-insure) that would be most likely to lack homeowner’s insurance.”²³

Fiscal Impact - If approved by the voters, the amendment would save taxpayers/reduce local government revenue by \$6.6 billion in FY2027-28, growing to \$8.6 billion in FY2031-32.²⁴ At the current statewide average non-school millage rate 10.48 mills, the net additional \$200,000 exemption would be worth \$2,096 per home, adjusted annually by inflation (if the house has an assessed value of at least \$250,000).²⁵

22 Calculation by Florida TaxWatch. Median home value from Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Housing Inventory: Median Home Listing Price in Florida, October 30, 2025.

23 Office of Economic and Demographic Research, results of the Revenue Estimating Impact Conference, HJR 209 (Alternate Language), pages 61-69, November 7, 2025.

24 Office of Economic and Demographic Research, results of the Revenue Estimating Impact Conference for CS/HJR 209, November 21, 2025.

25 Calculation by Florida TaxWatch, using statewide average non-school millage rate of 10.4758 mills.

Note: This summary and fiscal impact estimate is based on the proposed committee substitute for HJR 209 that was passed as amended by the Select Committee on Property Taxes on November 20, 2025. The original proposal was a new \$100,000 exemption for those with insurance that would be applied after the current 2nd homestead exemption. The fiscal estimate for the original bill was \$3.7 billion in FY2027-28, growing to \$4.9 billion in FY 2031-32.

HJR 211 - FULL PORTABILITY FOR NON-SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX

Currently, a homestead owner can transfer (port) any accrued Save-Our-Homes property tax benefit to a new homestead if the new homestead is established within three years of abandoning the old one and the new home has a higher just value. However, the amount is capped at \$500,000. If the new home has a lower value, the port is pro-rated. Under this amendment, the \$500,000 cap would be removed, and the full differential could be transferred to the new home, even if the new home has a lower just value.

Fiscal Impact - If approved by the voters, the amendment would save taxpayers/reduce local government revenue by \$42.7 million in FY2027-28, growing to \$336.8 million in FY2031-32.

Note: This summary and the fiscal impact estimate are based on the alternate language used by the Impact Conference, not the bill as currently filed. The original language provided the amount of the exemption—up to \$100,000—would be established by the Legislature in general law. It would be added to the second homestead exemption and included in the annual inflation adjustment.

HJR 213 - MODIFICATION OF LIMITATIONS ON PROPERTY ASSESSMENT INCREASES

The proposal would change the growth rates for the Save Our Homes and the non-homestead assessment caps. Assessment increases for homestead property are currently capped at the lesser of inflation or three percent per year and non-homestead property is capped at 10 percent per year. The frequency of assessment increases would change from annually to once every three years for non-school levies. Homestead assessment increases

would be capped at the lesser of three percent or three-year inflation. Non-homestead assessment increases would be capped at 15 percent once every three years. The current Save Our Homes cap for school levies would not change. The current non-homestead cap does not apply to school taxes.

Fiscal Impact - The impact estimate for this is tricky. Since most properties would have no assessed value increases in the first two years of the three-year cycle, the fiscal impact would approximately double in the second year, and then local governments would get a large revenue increase in the third year (but still less than under current law) when assessments are increased by three percent and 15 percent. If approved by the voters, the amendment would save taxpayers/reduce local government revenue by \$1.7 billion in FY2027-28, growing to \$5.2 billion in FY2031-32.

This is the only House proposal that provides a benefit to non-homestead properties and that would reduce Florida's property tax system's tax burden shift from homestead to non-homestead properties. It would reduce homestead taxes by \$375 million in the first year and \$1.0 billion by FY2031-32. Non-homestead taxes would be reduced by \$1.3 billion in the first year and \$2.6 billion by FY 2031-32.

HB 215 – AD VALOREM TAXATION

This is the only bill in the House package that was released by the speaker that makes statutory changes, meaning it doesn't have to go before the voters if the Legislature passes it. The bill has two provisions.

One would require a 2/3 supermajority vote for the governing body of any county, municipality, or special district to increase its millage rate.

The bill also would allow a newly married couple that had separate homestead exemptions within any of the previous three years to transfer their combined accumulated Save Our Homes benefit—up to \$500,000—to a single new homestead. The new home may be either of the prior eligible homesteads. Current law limits the transfer to the higher of the two previous differentials.

Fiscal Impact - Millage Rates: - Since the Impact Conference cannot predict what action governing bodies will take, the millage rate provision received a “zero/indeterminant negative” impact estimate. The impact

would likely be minor, since most increases in millage rates are now approved by at least a two-thirds vote (92 percent in the last four years).

Fiscal Impact - Full portability for Newly Married Couples: As currently written, this is the only House proposal that would impact school tax levies, because Save Our Homes applies to all taxes. This bill would save taxpayers/reduce local government revenue by \$44.5 million (\$16.4 million in school taxes) in FY2027-28, growing to \$81.1 million (\$29.6 million in school taxes) in FY2031-32.

OTHER PROPERTY TAX LEGISLATION

In addition to the proposals released by Speaker Perez, there are many other bills/joint resolutions that have already been filed for the 2026 Legislation Session, ranging from minor changes to very big ones. Some of the bills include reducing the Save Our Homes cap from three percent to 1.5 percent (HJR 67); a \$1,000 rebate to all taxpayers using state funds (HB 71); expanding the senior homestead exemption (SJR 270); creating an assessment cap for small businesses of the lesser of three percent or inflation; and stopping assessment increases after 20 years of continued residency and providing a new 50% homestead exemption after 30 years (SJR 274).

ISSUES TO BE EXAMINED WHEN CONSIDERING THE HOUSE PROPOSALS

It is understandable that the two common elements of the above proposed constitutional amendments were included. School and law enforcement funding is important as these are two of the basic services government provides. However, school funding, including most of the school property taxes, is controlled by the Legislature. A reduction in school property taxes would likely have to be made up with state revenue. Setting a constitutional floor for local government funding of law enforcement at the highest of the two prior years would not allow for needed efficiencies and budget reductions, especially if funding in the floor year was higher than usual due to extraordinary needs (such

as capital improvements). If the Legislature wants to maintain law enforcement funding, it would be better to provide for this statutorily to allow for reasonable exceptions, future changes, or eliminating the policy without having to amend the Constitution.

Eliminating Non-School Property Taxes - Putting a proposal on the 2026 ballot to eliminate all property taxes, or even non-school taxes on homestead property, is not responsible, especially without an accompanying comprehensive reform plan. This would address factors, such as local government fiscal responsibility, provision of critical government services, and safeguards against the shifting taxes to non-homestead properties. Property taxes are by far Florida's largest government revenue source, bringing in \$15 billion more than the state sales tax. It is also one of the few taxes that is not levied on transactions.

The degree to which different local governments depend on property taxes to fund their budgets varies considerably (see table below). For county governments, the average percentage of total revenue that comes from property taxes is 33.2 percent. The top three counties with the highest reliance are Nassau (56.8 percent), Flagler (55.5 percent), and Leon (53.1 percent). The bottom three are Liberty (12.3 percent), Washington (13.9 percent), and Duval (16.4 percent).²⁶ Municipalities average 14.7 percent, ranging from 0.0 percent to 98.3 percent.²⁷

Unwinding this longstanding critical revenue source for Florida cities, counties, and special districts is not something to attempt hastily, especially without a thorough understanding of the impacts and how to deal with them. Of the two proposals to eliminate non-school property taxes, a phase-out would certainly be more prudent than an immediate elimination, but still not in the best interest of the state.

²⁶ Florida TaxWatch, *How Florida Counties Compares*, November 2025. Calculations by Florida TaxWatch using data from the Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Department of Financial Services.

²⁷ Florida House of Representatives, Select Committee on Property Taxes, *Local Government: Case Study of Revenues and Expenditures*, meeting packet from May 13, 2025.

**TABLE 1.
COUNTY GOVERNMENT RELIANCE ON
PROPERTY TAXES VARIES WIDELY**

<i>PROPERTY TAXES AS PERCENT OF TOTAL REVENUE (FY 2023-24)</i>		
RANKING	COUNTY	% OF REVENUE
1	Nassau	56.8%
2	Flagler	55.5%
3	Leon	53.1%
4	Sumter	51.4%
5	St. Lucie	50.0%
6	Martin	48.7%
7	Putnam	43.9%
8	Walton	43.6%
9	Palm Beach	43.0%
10	Taylor	42.6%
11	Clay	42.1%
12	Hamilton	40.1%
13	Volusia	39.9%
14	Santa Rosa	39.7%
15	Glades	39.2%
16	Citrus	39.2%
17	St. Johns	38.1%
18	Indian River	36.9%
19	Pinellas	36.8%
20	Hillsborough	36.2%
21	Osceola	35.8%
22	Alachua	35.3%
23	Seminole	35.3%
24	Lake	34.6%
25	Collier	34.0%
26	Marion	33.9%
27	Suwannee	33.9%

RANKING	COUNTY	% OF REVENUE
28	Broward	33.8%
	STATEWIDE	33.2%
29	Orange	32.9%
30	Gadsden	32.8%
31	Franklin	32.5%
32	Escambia	32.5%
33	Bradford	32.4%
34	Polk	32.1%
35	Levy	31.7%
36	Gulf	31.7%
37	Pasco	31.6%
38	Hardee	31.5%
39	Gilchrist	30.8%
40	Okeechobee	30.6%
41	Bay	30.4%
42	Madison	30.1%
43	Highlands	30.0%
44	Hernando	29.1%
45	Hendry	29.0%
46	Manatee	28.7%
47	Lee	28.5%
48	Sarasota	27.7%
49	Brevard	27.1%
50	Columbia	27.0%
51	Calhoun	26.2%
52	Okaloosa	25.9%
53	Charlotte	25.7%
54	Lafayette	25.5%
55	Dixie	25.2%
56	DeSoto	24.9%
57	Monroe	22.9%
58	Jefferson	22.8%

RANKING	COUNTY	% OF REVENUE
59	Holmes	22.5%
60	Union	21.7%
61	Jackson	20.6%
62	Miami-Dade	20.3%
63	Baker	18.0%
64	Wakulla	16.7%
65	Duval	16.4%
66	Washington	13.9%
67	Liberty	12.3%

*Note: Includes county government only. Total Revenue is net of interfund transfers and custodial funds.
Source: Florida Department of Revenue and Office of Economic and Demographic Research. Calculations by Florida TaxWatch, September 2025*

Modifying the Assessment Caps – Changing the assessment increase caps for homestead property from the lesser of inflation or three percent per year to the lesser of inflation or three percent every three years and the non-homestead property cap from ten percent per year to 15 percent every three years is the only House proposal that provides a benefit to non-homestead properties. It is also the only one that would not increase the burden shift from homestead to non-homestead properties. It would in fact reduce the shift.

Property owners would see relative flat property taxes in the first two years of the three-year cycle (depending on millage rates) because of zero assessment growth but tax bills would get a big jump in year three (while still less than under current law). Although property owners would likely see an overall reduction in their tax bills, the 15 percent jump in non-homestead tax bills in year three might create difficulties for smaller businesses and landlords/tenants. A better approach is to stay with annual assessment increases but cap all properties at the same rate, changing Save Our Homes to Save Our Taxpayers. (See *Conclusions and Recommendations for more detail*).

Increased Homestead Exemptions – There are already two homestead exemptions in Florida, plus two others that are available to some seniors. One of the exemptions increases every year based on inflation. The total value of both exemptions is currently \$50,722, worth approximately \$269 at the current average statewide millage rates.²⁸

One proposal offers an additional exemption of 25 percent of a home's assessed value after deducting the current exemptions. This would provide all homeowners with a similarly sized exemption (relative to the home's value). Tying the size of the exemption to the home's value would help fiscally constrained counties deal with the revenue impact better than a large "one size fits all" homestead exemption. The Legislature should instead consider an exemption equal to 25 percent (or any percentage) of the median home value in the county. This would also reduce the fiscal impact for poorer counties, while also generally providing a larger relative benefit to those residents at the lower end of the income scale than those with more expensive homes. A larger relative benefit to lower priced

homes could also help more with housing affordability and lower housing costs for first-time homeowners.

The other proposal that offers an additional \$225,000 exemption to homeowners who have a multi-peril insurance policy, has the potential benefit of incentivizing some of the 17.3 percent of uninsured homes to buy insurance. Florida's current homestead structure assures that almost every homeowner pays some property taxes, since the home's value between \$25,000 and \$50,000 is not covered by an exemption. This proposal would make a homestead property totally exempt from all non-school taxes, if it has an assessed value of no more than \$250,000.

Florida TaxWatch offers an alternative homestead exemption proposal—creating a first-time homeowner exemption. One of the recent priorities of the Governor and the Legislature is affordable/workforce housing and making it easier for first-time homeowners to buy their first house. The average age of a first-time homeowner has been increasing and recently reached 40 years old, an all-time high.²⁹ This is one of the reasons many people support reducing property taxes. But the current tax shift hurts people looking to buy a home as well as non-homestead properties. Even though this report shows that average millage rates have been decreasing slightly, the upward pressure that reduced assessed and taxable values put on millage rates makes taxes higher than they would be without the tax shift. New homeowners pay these inflated millage rates on the full value of the house (minus the homestead exemptions), increasing the total cost of buying a home. Save Our Homes will help slow the growth of their tax bill once they purchase a home, but their tax bill will always be higher than any of their neighbors who live in similar homes but have been under SOH for longer. See the *Conclusions and Recommendations* section for more details.

Portability Changes - There are two portability proposals—no-limit portability and allowing newly married couples to transfer their combined SOH differential to a new home.

The current \$500,000 limit on portability is reasonable. So is the current requirement that if the new home's just value is less than the old home's just value, the differential must be prorated. The first proposal would do away with both these limits.

²⁸ Calculation by Florida TaxWatch, using statewide average millage rates of 5.9920 mills for school levies and 10.4678 mills for non-school levies.

²⁹ Realtor.com, News & Insights, "The Typical First-Time Homebuyer Is Now 40 Years Old, a Record High, November 4, 2025.

The newly married proposal would allow both people to keep the differentials they earned while owning their previous homes. It maintains the \$500,000 limit, but the provision for prorating the differential if the new home has a lower just value should also apply.

It should be noticed that both proposals create the possibility that a homestead could become permanently totally exempt from property taxes. Without the provision that the differential is pro-rated if the new home has a lower value, the ported differential could exceed the just value, resulting in an assessed value of \$0. And since the SOH cap is applied to the prior year's assessed value, the home would be assessed at \$0 for as long as the owner lives in the home.³⁰

Senior Exemption – This proposal would exempt all homestead properties owned by a person age 65 or older from non-school taxes. There are currently two homestead exemptions available at the discretion of cities and counties, but the maximum household income limitation (\$37,694, adjusted annually by inflation) and the requirement that the home is valued at no more than \$250,000 (for the total exemption) should be updated.

Supermajority Vote to Increase Millage Rates – As discussed above, controlling millage rates is the only way to truly limit property taxes. However, the impact of this proposal to require a 2/3 supermajority vote to increase the millage rate would likely be minor, since most increases in millage rates are now approved by at least a two-thirds vote (92 percent in the last four years). There were only 17 times that a millage rate increase has been adopted without a two-thirds majority.³¹

WHILE WIDELY DISLIKED, THE PROPERTY TAX HAS ITS GOOD QUALITIES

Nobody likes property taxes, except maybe economists. Surveys consistently show it is the most despised tax by Americans, having wrestled that dubious distinction from the federal income taxes more than 35 years ago.³² Paying that large lump sum, or paying it on your monthly mortgage bill, riles people up. And the contention that property taxes means you can never really own your own home is understandable. However, when compared to other taxes in terms of tax policy, the property tax has benefits that are well supported by the economic literature.³³

The Tax Foundation illustrates how property taxes are:

- More economically efficient, causing less economic harm than other taxes or fees raising the same amount of revenue.
- Less distortionary, impacting economic decision making less than alternatives like sales and income taxes since they do not penalize productivity, consumption, work, or, to a lesser degree, investment.
- More equitable since they roughly align with government services and benefits property owners receive.
- More sensitive to local preferences on the size and scope of government since they are highly transparent and correlate strongly with services that enhance the value and utility of property.

It should be noted that assessment caps such as Save Our Homes negatively impact some of these benefits, including reducing equity and increasing economic distortion. Most of the proposals currently being discussed would lessen the comparatively pro-growth features of Florida's property tax system.

These benefits do not mean more property taxes are good for the economy. Taxes do not create economic growth. Instead, they impede it to different degrees. Past Florida TaxWatch research has shown that

³⁰ Office of Economic and Demographic Research, results of the Revenue Estimating Impact Conference, HB 215, page 42, November 7, 2025.

³¹ Office of Economic and Demographic Research, results of the Revenue Estimating Impact Conference, HB 215, page 42, November 7, 2025.

³² National Council of State Legislatures, *The Most Hated Tax—and What States Are Doing About It*, May 18, 2023.

³³ Tax Foundation, *Confronting the New Property Tax Revolt*, November 5, 2024.

swapping property taxes for sales taxes would result in significant losses in gross regional product and real disposable personal income.³⁴ Other studies support these findings.³⁵

Drastically reducing property taxes without adequate controls on local government spending will not only shift tax burden between property taxpayers but it could also result in increasing other taxes. Florida local governments currently have more than \$13 billion in untapped local option sales taxes available to them. Dramatic reductions in property taxes would likely be, at least partially, a property tax/sales tax swap.

This discussion of the comparable benefits of the property tax does not support Florida's skyrocketing property taxes and rising local government spending, nor does it negate the need to reduce local taxing and spending and provide needed relief to Florida taxpayers. This should be addressed in way that increases property tax equity and does not produce unintended economic harm.

Appendix C shows how the spending of most county governments has exceeded the combined growth of population and inflation over ten years. It should be noted that the latest available complete expenditure data is FY2022-23. This excludes fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25, which saw two of the biggest increases in property tax revenue since FY2026-27, increasing 24 percent. The resulting influx of \$11 billion in additional revenue for counties, cities, schools, and special districts surely boosted local budgets even more.

A deep dive into local budgeting needs to be undertaken and the Governor has created the Florida Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), under the direction of the Florida Chief Financial Officer for the purpose of "recommending legislative reforms to promote efficiency, maximize productivity, and eliminate waste in state and local government."³⁶ DOGE is currently auditing local governments.

OTHER ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE PART OF THE PROPERTY TAX DEBATE

Tax Shift Makes First-Time Homebuying Less Affordable - One of the recent priorities of the Governor and the Legislature is affordable/workforce housing and making it easier for first-time homeowners to buy their first house. The average age of people purchasing their first house is increasing and recently reached 40 years old.³⁷ This is one of the reasons many people support reducing property taxes. But the current tax shift also increases taxes on people looking to buy a home. Even though this report shows that average millage rates have been decreasing slightly, the upward pressure that reduced assessed and taxable values put on millage rates makes taxes higher than they would be without the tax shift. New homeowners pay these inflated millage rates on the full value of the house (minus the homestead exemptions), increasing the total cost of buying a first home. Save Our Homes will help slow the growth of their tax bill once they purchase a home, but their tax bill will always be higher than any of their neighbors who live in similar homes but have been under SOH for longer. The same is also true for people moving to Florida from out-of-state.

The tax shift created by Florida's property tax system already makes buying a home less affordable. In addition, extensive research shows that reduced property taxes lead to higher home prices, including a new Florida-based report that predicts eliminating property taxes would "immediately" increase home values by seven percent to nine percent.³⁸ Higher home values equal higher assessments. Eliminating property taxes, while lowering housing costs long-term, would make the current obstacle to first-time homeownership of unaffordable initial costs even hard to overcome. In addition, since higher values would not increase assessments on houses under Save Our Homes above the SOH cap, this would also exacerbate the current tax shift.

34 Florida TaxWatch, *Model Predicts Florida Economy Will Gain by Property Tax Cut Without Changing Sales Tax*

35 Florida TaxWatch has reviewed several studies cited in the above referenced Tax Foundation report.

36 State of Florida Office of the Governor, Executive Order 25-44, Ensuring Government Efficiency, February 24, 2025.

37 Realtor.com, News & Insights, *The Typical First-Time Homebuyer Is Now 40 Years Old, a Record High*, November 4, 2025.

38 Realtor.com, *Florida Home Prices Could Spike Up to 9% Under Ron DeSantis' Plan to Eliminate Property Taxes*, December 1, 2025.

Special Assessments are Also Boosting Tax Bills - Another local levy that is making homeownership less and less affordable is special assessments, which are skyrocketing. Special assessments, also known as non-ad valorem assessments, are a home rule revenue source that may be used by local governments to fund certain services, and construct and maintain capital facilities. To impose a special assessment, the property assessed must derive a special benefit from the improvement or service provided, and the assessment must be fairly and reasonably apportioned among the properties that receive the special benefit. If a local government's special assessment ordinance withstands these two legal requirements, the assessment is not considered a tax which is levied for the general benefit of all residents and property, but rather a fee levied for a specific benefit to persons and property in a specific area. That distinction is becoming increasingly lost on many taxpayers, and perhaps the lines are also being blurred by local governments. While technically not a tax, these assessments are included in taxpayers' property tax bills, and the number and amount of these assessments are growing rapidly, playing a role in taxpayers' anger over property taxes.

Florida counties, cities, and special districts now levy \$5.7 billion in special assessments, growing 106 percent over the last ten years, almost as fast as property taxes (109 percent). Special districts' assessments were the fastest growing of the three levels of government, rising 132 percent. This is faster than population growth (25 percent), inflation (27 percent), and even growth in Florida's total personal income (76 percent). These assessments totaled \$848 million in 2004, rising almost sevenfold since.³⁹

Value Adjustment Boards (VABs) Need Basic Reform – VABs settle disputes between taxpayers and county property appraisers. A taxpayer may file a petition to challenge a property appraiser's assessment value, exemption status, or property classification. The Legislature has considered numerous pieces of legislation in recent years to improve VABs. In 2025, legislation passed which allows petitioners to attend hearings electronically and requires the property appraiser to provide the petitioner with evidence to be presented at least 15 days prior to the hearing. These are helpful, but there is a much bigger issue.

For years, Florida TaxWatch has heard concerns from taxpayers about the difficulty (almost the impossibility) of getting a favorable decision from most VABs. This is borne out by data from the Florida Department of Revenue. Miami-Dade grants reductions in more than 40 percent of appeals. When you exclude this outlier, only three percent of taxpayers (parcels) requesting a reduction in their assessment received a reduction in 2024. The percentage of taxpayers prevailing over the last five years has not exceeded five percent.⁴⁰

VABs are independent of the property appraiser but not of the local government, the ones who spend the property taxes. This “fox watching the henhouse” situation raises questions of true independence. VAB membership consists of two county commissioners, one school board member and two citizens. Most counties use special magistrates to make recommendations to the Board, but the VAB has final say. They also hire the special magistrates and decide whether to renew their contracts. The county commissioners and the school board members appoint the citizen members.

Taxpayers very seldom prevail in challenges before the VAB, and many believe the lack of independence contributes to this. The Legislature should examine this issue and determine if there is a better structure to ensure taxpayer challenges are handled fairly.

³⁹ Florida TaxWatch, using data from the Office of Economic and Demographic Research and the Department of Financial Services

⁴⁰ Florida Department of Revenue, *Form DR-529, Notice – Tax Impact of Value Adjustment Board*.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Property taxes and local government spending in Florida have been rising rapidly, with property taxes doubling in the last ten years, including nearly 40 percent growth in the last three. Tax relief for Floridians is certainly justified and so is putting the brakes on local spending, although some local governments have controlled their spending better than others.⁴¹ But as legislators consider how to provide property tax relief, they must remember that Florida's current tax system shifts the tax burden from homestead to non-homestead properties. As a result, homeowners qualifying for Save Our Homes and homestead exemptions have been shielded from much of that increase.

Providing property tax relief to Florida taxpayers is commendable and the focus on homestead property by the Governor and the Legislature is understandable. But putting a proposal on the 2026 ballot to eliminate all property taxes, or even non-school taxes on homestead property, is not advisable. Property taxes are by far Florida's largest government revenue source, \$15 billion larger than the state sales tax. Unwinding this longstanding critical revenue source for local governments is not something to attempt hastily, especially without a thorough understanding of the impacts and how to deal with them. There are 67 Florida counties, more than 400 municipalities, and approximately 160 independent special districts with the authority to levy property taxes and/or special assessments and no two are alike. Local government reliance on property taxes varies significantly and eliminating them or reducing them drastically will hurt some more than others. The rate of property tax growth also varies and some local governments are better stewards of taxpayer money than others.

The property tax is also one of the few taxes in Florida that is not levied on transactions, and it has some relatively good features from a tax policy and economic development standpoint. Taxes, by themselves, do not create economic growth, but there is ample evidence that property taxes impede growth less than sales or income taxes. Increasing Florida state and local government tax structure's already high reliance on sales and other transactions has downsides.

Reducing taxes on homeowners is fine, but those that have been bearing the brunt of rising property taxes should not be forgotten. This includes renters, businesses, people renovating or building an addition to their home, people moving to Florida, and new homeowners. Almost all of the proposals before the Legislature would increase the tax shift from homestead to non-homestead property that already stands at more than \$10 billion and growing. The time is right for a "Save Our Taxpayers" cap to be created, limiting the increases in assessments for both homestead and non-homestead property at the same growth rate. This has been a long-standing Florida TaxWatch recommendation and our research helped to get the constitutional amendment on the ballot that created the 10 percent homestead cap in 2008. But as discussed in this report, while the cap helped, it is not enough.

Floridians are finding it increasingly difficult to buy their first home. Property taxes are part of the problem and the tax shift exacerbates it. The average age of a first-time homeowner recently reached 40 years old, an all-time high.⁴² A new exemption for first-time homeowners would help. For example, an exemption equal to 25 percent of the new home's initial assessed value could be structured so that the new homeowner would have an immediate 25 percent reduction in value which would then be phased out (dollar for dollar) as their Save Our Homes differential increases. If the house is originally assessed at \$400,000, the owner would be assured of a fixed \$100,000 exemption (in addition to the current homestead exemptions). This would keep the amount of the total exemption constant as the Save Our Homes benefit rises. If the owner continues living in the house long enough for the SOH benefit to reach \$100,000, the effective exemption will begin increasing.

The Legislature should also not forget about millage rates. Taxable values are only part of the equation in arriving at your tax bill, the millage rate is the other. This report has shown that no matter what kind of property tax relief has been granted, property tax collections keep rising. It must be remembered that if taxable values in a tax jurisdiction decrease from one year to the next (whether due to added exemptions or falling property values), a local government rolled-back rate becomes

⁴¹ See Appendix C of this report and the Florida TaxWatch report "2025 How Florida Counties Compares," December 2025, for more comparisons of local taxing and spending.

⁴² Realtor.com, News & Insights, "The Typical First-Time Homebuyer Is Now 40 Years Old, a Record High," November 4, 2025.

a “rolled up” rate.⁴³ This means local governments can adopt a higher millage rate that recoups those tax losses without even having to portray it as a tax increase. Florida’s rapidly rising property values, in tandem with local governments’ ability to adjust millage rates, have assured steady revenue growth. Any exemption the Legislature passes for only one class of property should be accompanied by a requirement that local governments adopt the rolled-back rate after adding back any taxable value lost to the new exemption. This should be required for at least two years. This not only ensures that tax burden is not, at least temporarily, shifted to other properties, but also that taxpayers receive the full value of the exemption the Legislature (and voters) expected. If some taxpayers get reduced taxes, and total tax revenues do not decrease, that means someone else is paying for it.

Based on the findings in this report, **FLORIDA TAXWATCH RECOMMENDS:**

- The Legislature should not attempt to put a constitutional amendment on the November 2026 ballot to eliminate all property taxes, even if it is limited to non-school property tax levies. Undertaking such a major change in Florida’s tax system should not be attempted without a comprehensive reform plan, including local government efficiency and fiscal responsibility, ensuring the provision of critical government services, and safeguards against the shifting taxes to non-homestead properties.
- A “Save Our Taxpayers” amendment should be put before the voters to replace the current inadequate 10 percent non-homestead assessment cap with one that matches the Save Our Homes cap of the lesser of three percent or inflation. This would help stop the current tax shift and ensure that all taxpayers are treated more fairly.
- The Legislature should create an additional exemption for new homeowners—for example, 25 percent of the new home’s initial assessed value. This could be structured so that the new homeowner would have an immediate 25 percent reduction in value which would then be phased out (dollar for dollar) as their Save Our Homes differential increases. This would reduce the cost of buying a home, especially in the first year, helping more Floridians achieve the goal of homeownership.

- If the Legislature wants to create a new homestead exemption, it should consider making the amount equal to a percentage of the median home value in the county where the home is located. Instead of a “one size fits all” amount for all homes statewide, tying the size of the exemption to each home’s value would make the tax savings relatively greater for those in the county with lower home values and therefore likely lower incomes. By acknowledging the difference in median home values between counties, it could help fiscally constrained counties deal with the revenue loss.
- Any new property tax benefit for homestead property should be accompanied by a requirement that local governments adopt the rolled-back rate after adding back any taxable value lost to the new exemption, at least temporarily. This would ensure that tax burden is not shifted to other properties, but also that taxpayers receive the full value of the exemption the Legislature (and voters) expected.
- The Legislature should reform the Value Adjustment Board system, especially increasing the independence of VABs from the local officials that spend the money. A three percent success rate for taxpayers challenging their assessments (for people outside of Miami-Dade County) does not indicate a fair system.

⁴³ If the taxable value of a new tax roll, minus the value of new construction, is less than the prior year’s value, it will take a higher millage rate to raise the same amount of revenue as last year. Florida law considers any millage rate over the rolled-back rate to be a tax increase. This is an example of when the rolled-back rate can be higher than the current millage rate.

APPENDIX A

PROPERTY TAX GROWTH VS. POPULATION AND INFLATION 2014 TO 2024			
RANK	COUNTY	TAX GROWTH	POP. & INFLATION
1	Walton	216.1%	90.4%
2	Pasco	169.2%	70.2%
3	Osceola	157.3%	96.9%
4	Nassau	147.4%	78.4%
5	Saint Lucie	146.2%	75.9%
6	Manatee	145.8%	74.7%
7	Saint Johns	139.5%	103.3%
8	Charlotte	137.8%	67.7%
9	Marion	135.5%	61.4%
10	Gulf	134.7%	37.6%
11	Polk	133.8%	72.0%
12	Orange	132.3%	60.7%
13	Okeechobee	131.5%	35.7%
14	Lake	130.7%	78.2%
15	Flagler	119.5%	78.8%
16	Hillsborough	118.5%	58.1%
17	Sumter	118.5%	92.1%
18	Hernando	114.6%	56.7%
19	Miami-Dade	109.7%	42.6%
20	Sarasota	109.2%	62.2%
	STATEWIDE	108.1%	54.9%
21	Clay	107.4%	57.2%
22	Putnam	106.9%	37.9%
23	Collier	105.6%	60.7%
24	Duval	103.0%	55.3%
25	Bay	100.5%	50.9%

RANK	COUNTY	TAX GROWTH	POP. & INFLATION
26	Hendry	100.4%	58.7%
27	Broward	100.3%	44.0%
28	Palm Beach	99.4%	48.2%
29	Gilchrist	99.2%	52.2%
30	Monroe	97.8%	44.8%
31	Pinellas	96.4%	38.4%
32	Santa Rosa	93.5%	68.4%
33	Lee	93.3%	65.0%
34	Brevard	91.0%	54.8%
35	Indian River	90.1%	58.0%
36	Martin	90.1%	45.8%
37	Escambia	84.5%	45.5%
38	Volusia	83.6%	54.3%
39	Glades	80.5%	36.9%
40	Seminole	80.3%	48.9%
41	Okaloosa	80.1%	51.5%
42	Levy	78.2%	47.6%
43	DeSoto	77.7%	39.0%
44	Alachua	74.9%	52.9%
45	Franklin	74.6%	46.0%
46	Suwannee	73.5%	40.9%
47	Wakulla	72.7%	56.0%
48	Baker	71.2%	41.0%
49	Leon	70.3%	42.4%
50	Citrus	69.1%	53.1%
51	Gadsden	63.1%	27.2%
52	Bradford	63.0%	32.9%
53	Jefferson	62.3%	41.4%
54	Hardee	59.9%	27.2%
55	Madison	58.3%	30.8%
56	Highlands	56.3%	41.8%

RANK	COUNTY	TAX GROWTH	POP. & INFLATION
57	Columbia	55.6%	40.3%
58	Dixie	54.3%	41.7%
59	Jackson	51.3%	30.0%
60	UNION	50.9%	33.9%
61	Hamilton	48.2%	33.2%
62	Liberty	47.4%	26.0%
63	Calhoun	45.8%	26.4%
64	Taylor	45.6%	26.9%
65	Lafayette	43.0%	31.1%
66	Holmes	40.1%	33.3%
67	Washington	35.3%	40.1%

*Includes all taxing jurisdictions in each county (counties, cities, school districts and special districts).
Source: Florida Department of Revenue. Calculations by Florida TaxWatch, September 2025.*

APPENDIX B

PER CAPITA TOTAL PROPERTY TAX LEVIES FY 2024-25			
RANK	COUNTY	TAX GROWTH	POP. & INFLATION
1	Monroe	216.1%	90.4%
2	Walton	169.2%	70.2%
3	Collier	157.3%	96.9%
4	Palm Beach	147.4%	78.4%
5	Martin	146.2%	75.9%
6	Miami-Dade	145.8%	74.7%
7	Broward	139.5%	103.3%
8	Franklin	137.8%	67.7%
9	Gulf	135.5%	61.4%
10	Sarasota	134.7%	37.6%
11	Nassau	133.8%	72.0%
12	Pinellas	132.3%	60.7%
13	Orange	131.5%	35.7%
14	Charlotte	130.7%	78.2%
15	Indian River	119.5%	78.8%
16	Lee	118.5%	58.1%
	STATEWIDE	118.5%	92.1%
17	Manatee	114.6%	56.7%
18	Saint Lucie	109.7%	42.6%
19	Saint Johns	109.2%	62.2%
20	Flagler	108.1%	54.9%
21	Bay	107.4%	57.2%
22	Hillsborough	106.9%	37.9%
23	Duval	105.6%	60.7%
24	Volusia	103.0%	55.3%
25	Osceola	100.5%	50.9%
26	Putnam	100.4%	58.7%

RANK	COUNTY	TAX GROWTH	POP. & INFLATION
27	Alachua	100.3%	44.0%
28	Hendry	99.4%	48.2%
29	Okaloosa	99.2%	52.2%
30	Seminole	97.8%	44.8%
31	Okeechobee	96.4%	38.4%
32	Sumter	93.5%	68.4%
33	Brevard	93.3%	65.0%
34	Glades	91.0%	54.8%
35	Hardee	90.1%	58.0%
36	Pasco	90.1%	45.8%
37	Lake	84.5%	45.5%
38	Leon	83.6%	54.3%
39	Hamilton	80.5%	36.9%
40	Taylor	80.3%	48.9%
41	Citrus	80.1%	51.5%
42	Marion	78.2%	47.6%
43	Escambia	77.7%	39.0%
44	Polk	74.9%	52.9%
45	DeSoto	74.6%	46.0%
46	Hernando	73.5%	40.9%
47	Clay	72.7%	56.0%
48	Highlands	71.2%	41.0%
49	Levy	70.3%	42.4%
50	Gilchrist	69.1%	53.1%
51	Santa Rosa	63.1%	27.2%
52	Jefferson	63.0%	32.9%
53	Madison	62.3%	41.4%
54	Suwannee	59.9%	27.2%
55	Dixie	58.3%	30.8%
56	Columbia	56.3%	41.8%

RANK	COUNTY	TAX GROWTH	POP. & INFLATION
57	Bradford	55.6%	40.3%
58	Gadsden	54.3%	41.7%
59	Wakulla	51.3%	30.0%
60	Baker	50.9%	33.9%
61	Washington	48.2%	33.2%
62	Calhoun	47.4%	26.0%
63	Lafayette	45.8%	26.4%
64	Liberty	45.6%	26.9%
65	Jackson	43.0%	31.1%
66	Holmes	40.1%	33.3%
67	Union	35.3%	40.1%

*Includes all taxing jurisdictions in each county (counties, cities, school districts and special districts) and uses total county population.
 Source: Florida Department of Revenue and Florida TaxWatch, September 2025.*

APPENDIX C

COUNTY EXPENDITURE GROWTH VS. POPULATION AND INFLATION FY 2024-25			
RANK	COUNTY	TAX GROWTH	POP. & INFLATION
1	Washington*	299.9%	35.3%
2	Liberty	186.3%	23.7%
3	Gulf	177.6%	33.3%
4	Bay	156.4%	45.3%
5	Okeechobee	126.4%	31.0%
6	DeSoto	115.9%	33.9%
7	Flagler	114.8%	75.8%
8	Dixie	113.8%	39.7%
9	Nassau	113.4%	77.6%
10	Santa Rosa	112.9%	69.6%
11	Osceola	112.5%	100.4%
12	Lake	110.9%	79.9%
13	Pasco	108.1%	69.7%
14	Charlotte	102.3%	64.1%
15	Gilchrist	100.9%	49.1%
16	Clay	96.7%	57.6%
17	Saint Johns	93.2%	105.8%
18	Okaloosa	90.8%	53.2%
19	Manatee	89.7%	73.2%
20	Marion	88.9%	58.6%
21	Seminole	86.5%	48.6%
22	Hendry	83.3%	42.3%
23	Escambia	81.6%	45.7%
24	Franklin	80.9%	47.6%
25	Orange	80.4%	63.3%

RANK	COUNTY	TAX GROWTH	POP. & INFLATION
26	Lee	74.0%	63.8%
27	Polk	73.8%	70.9%
28	Broward	72.7%	45.5%
29	Collier	72.0%	57.5%
30	Martin	71.5%	44.7%
31	Sumter	69.3%	94.4%
32	Monroe	68.7%	51.2%
33	Indian River	68.5%	58.1%
34	Wakulla	67.7%	54.2%
35	Gadsden	65.7%	22.8%
36	Hernando	65.4%	54.6%
37	Jackson	65.1%	28.5%
	Statewide	63.1%	54.5%
38	Walton	63.0%	89.8%
39	Highlands	62.2%	38.6%
40	Putnam	59.8%	37.5%
41	Citrus	59.4%	51.9%
42	Hamilton	59.1%	24.0%
43	Sarasota	57.5%	58.5%
44	Saint Lucie	56.7%	72.5%
45	Volusia	55.1%	53.9%
	Bradford	55.1%	32.4%
47	Alachua	54.8%	55.5%
48	Calhoun	53.9%	24.3%
49	Holmes	53.6%	30.8%
50	Palm Beach	52.4%	49.9%
51	Baker	50.2%	38.7%
52	Lafayette	49.0%	23.3%
53	Madison	47.8%	26.8%
54	Hillsborough	47.2%	58.9%

RANK	COUNTY	TAX GROWTH	POP. & INFLATION
55	Columbia	46.9%	40.7%
56	Brevard	46.7%	53.7%
57	Miami-Dade	44.7%	41.1%
58	Jefferson	44.5%	39.2%
59	Hardee	44.0%	21.9%
60	Pinellas	42.1%	38.4%
61	Leon	41.3%	42.6%
62	Taylor	40.7%	24.0%
63	Levy	40.0%	47.8%
64	Union	37.0%	37.1%
65	Suwannee	36.5%	36.3%
66	Glades	8.5%	30.9%

*Includes county government expenditures only.
Excludes custodial revenues and inter-fund transfers.
* Large infrastructure and other fixed capital outlay projects can skew expenditures, especially in smaller counties.
Washington County had \$50 million in transportation spending in 2023, approximately two-thirds of total spending.
Source: Florida Department of Revenue. Calculations by Florida TaxWatch, November 2025.*

APPENDIX D

CHANGE IN AVERAGE MILLAGE RATES VS. GROWTH IN PROPERTY TAXES			
<i>2014 TO 2024 - ALL LEVIES IN GEOGRAPHIC COUNTY</i>			
RANK	COUNTY	% CHANGE IN MILLAGE	% CHANGE IN TAXES
1	Alachua	-12.7%	74.9%
2	Baker	-14.4%	71.2%
3	Bay	-5.7%	100.5%
4	Bradford	-6.7%	63.0%
5	Brevard	-21.8%	91.0%
6	Broward	-5.1%	100.3%
7	Calhoun	-11.6%	45.8%
8	Charlotte	-9.0%	137.8%
9	Citrus	-11.7%	69.1%
10	Clay	-4.0%	107.4%
11	Collier	-15.2%	105.6%
12	Columbia	-17.0%	55.6%
13	Dade	-8.8%	109.7%
14	DeSoto	-8.5%	77.7%
15	Dixie	-8.2%	54.3%
16	Duval	-6.5%	103.0%
17	Escambia	-13.3%	84.5%
18	Flagler	-12.2%	119.5%
19	Franklin	-22.7%	74.6%
20	Gadsden	-6.6%	63.1%
21	Gilchrist	-10.7%	99.2%
22	Glades	-8.1%	80.5%
23	Gulf	-16.7%	134.7%
24	Hamilton	-9.6%	48.2%

RANK	COUNTY	% CHANGE IN MILLAGE	% CHANGE IN TAXES
25	Hardee	-16.6%	59.9%
26	Hendry	-19.2%	100.4%
27	Hernando	-7.6%	114.6%
28	Highlands	-15.1%	56.3%
29	Hillsborough	-10.5%	118.5%
30	Holmes	-9.5%	40.1%
31	Indian River	-14.2%	90.1%
32	Jackson	-5.9%	51.3%
33	Jefferson	-16.0%	62.3%
34	Lafayette	-4.9%	43.0%
34	Lake	-11.2%	130.7%
35	Lee	-20.1%	93.3%
36	Leon	-4.9%	70.3%
37	Levy	-12.3%	78.2%
38	Liberty	-13.9%	47.4%
39	Madison	-18.4%	58.3%
40	Manatee	-10.3%	145.8%
41	Marion	-1.3%	135.5%
42	Martin	-3.8%	90.1%
43	Monroe	-17.1%	97.8%
44	Nassau	-4.0%	147.4%
45	Okaloosa	-10.7%	80.1%
46	Okeechobee	-20.2%	131.5%
47	Orange	17.3%	132.3%
48	Osceola	-11.5%	157.3%
49	Palm Beach	-13.7%	99.4%
50	Pasco	0.5%	169.2%
51	Pinellas	-13.5%	96.4%
52	Polk	-11.0%	133.8%

RANK	COUNTY	% CHANGE IN MILLAGE	% CHANGE IN TAXES
53	Putnam	-7.7%	106.9%
54	Saint Johns	-17.6%	139.5%
55	Saint Lucie	-5.1%	146.2%
56	Santa Rosa	-15.0%	93.5%
57	Sarasota	-12.7%	109.2%
58	Seminole	-12.5%	80.3%
59	Sumter	-11.6%	118.5%
60	Suwannee	-10.3%	73.5%
61	Taylor	-10.7%	45.6%
62	Union	-10.5%	50.9%
63	Volusia	-22.6%	83.6%
64	Wakulla	-21.8%	72.7%
65	Walton	-10.6%	216.1%
66	Washington	-18.7%	35.3%
	STATEWIDE	-10.9%	108.1%
<i>Includes all taxing jurisdictions in each county (counties, cities, school districts and special districts). Source: Florida Department of Revenue. Calculations by Florida TaxWatch, November 2025.</i>			

ABOUT FLORIDA TAXWATCH

As an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit taxpayer research institute and government watchdog, it is the mission of Florida TaxWatch to provide the taxpayers of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and analysis of issues related to state and local government taxation, expenditures, policies, and programs. Florida TaxWatch works to improve the productivity and accountability of Florida government. Its research recommends productivity enhancements and explains the statewide impact of fiscal and economic policies and practices on citizens and businesses.

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