

What's on the November Ballot....

Registered voters throughout Texas get a chance to get their hands on true democracy by deciding on whether 14 propositions will be added to the Texas Constitution by the Nov. 7 Constitution Amendment Election. Registration to vote ends Oct. 10 to be eligible to cast a ballot.

To get on the ballot, the constitutional amendments were approved by 2/3 of both the House and the Senate. To get into the constitution, each proposition must receive a simple majority of all votes.

One proposition, No. 4 affects the most Texans and would modify certain provisions of the Texas Constitution related to property taxes if approved. Earlier this year, the Legislature approved \$12.7 billion in property tax cuts, which needs voter approval to be given back to property owners. The amendment would increase the homestead exemption from \$40,000 to \$100,000 effective on this year's property tax bills.

The proposition would also approve a temporary limit on appraisals for commercial, mineral and residential properties. The increase in the appraised value for a non-homestead property, such as a business property or second home, cannot be more than 20% over the prior year's appraised value. Only non-homestead properties with value of \$5 million or less currently qualify and this tax limit expires Dec. 31, 2026.

More than \$7 billion will be sent to school districts in order to lower their property tax rates and the proposition would allow this money to be sent without counting toward spending limits in the constitution.

Other propositions

Proposition 1 would protect the right to engage in farming, ranching, timber production, horticulture and wildlife management on owned or leased personal property.

Proposition 2 would exempt childcare facilities from ad valorem taxation by a county or municipality of all or part of the appraised value of real property used to operate a child-care facility.

Proposition 3 prohibits the imposition of an individual wealth or net worth tax, including a tax on the difference between the assets and liabilities of an individual or family.

Proposition 5 relates to the Texas University Fund, which provides funding to certain institutions of higher education to achieve national prominence as major research universities and drive the state economy.

Proposition 6 would create the Texas Water Fund to help in financing water projects in this state. A portion of the fund would have to be used for water infrastructure projects in rural areas as well as for water conservation strategies and water loss projects.

Proposition 7 would create the Texas Energy Fund to support the construction, maintenance, modernization and operation of electric generating facilities. It would allow officials to distribute loans and grants to companies with the aim of building new natural gas fueled power plants. The Legislature set aside \$5 billion to fund these programs for the next two years.

Proposition 8 would create the Broadband Infrastructure Fund to expand high-speed broadband access and assist in the financing of connectivity projects. More than \$1.5 billion would be allocated to expand internet availability, where more than 7 million Texans currently lack access.

Those eligible will see a cost of living adjustment to the Teacher Retirement System of Texas, if Proposition 9 passes.

Proposition 10 would exempt from ad valorem taxation equipment or inventory held by the manufacturer of medical or biomedical products to protect the Texas healthcare network and strengthen our medical supply chain.

Proposition 11 would authorize the Legislature to permit conservation and reclamation districts in El Paso County to issue bonds supported by ad valorem taxes to fund the development and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities

Proposition 12 would abolish the office of county treasurer in Galveston County.

Concerning the state judges and justices, Proposition 13 would increase the mandatory retirement age from 75 to 79 and the minimum retirement age to 75 years, up from 70.

Proposition 14 would create the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund, which would be used for the creation and improvement of state parks.

.Early voting begins Monday, Oct. 23, and ends Friday, Nov. 3. The deadline for mail ballot application is Friday, Oct. 27.