

Property Owners And The 2018 Legislative Session

So here we are half way through the 2018 legislative session and we are left wondering if anything is going to get done. Floridians are asking themselves what have the elected officials done to help property owners in our area.

The answer is not as simple as one may think, you see the hundreds of bills that are filed are filled with special interest and "pork". 2018 is an election year. Couple that with defect years because of the 2017 hurricanes and you come up with a conservative session. You see no one wants to rock the boat with controversial issues or bold initiatives.

The most property owners can expect is a marginal cut on commercial rent tax and maybe a stipend for the housing trust funds. 2018 will be filled with special elections for local governments trying to push tax initiatives because of the "noise" that will be defining later this year.

The cost of running a bill or issue during an election year has become too costly for many groups to compete. The constitutional review commission is meeting this year to determine what if any issues need to be passed without voters voice. While most of the initiatives pass without opposition some issues do draw fire.

One such issue is Amendment 2 which places a cap on non-home stead properties. Most homeowner feel that a cap on non homestead property do not affect them but they could not be more wrong. Even though Floridians enjoy healthy tax breaks fee understand the impact that non residents and commercial owners have in their taxes. Amendment 2 is critical to a healthy tax base and ensuring that we remain healthy and a viable option to investors.

There are is no known opposition to Amendment 2 and the supporters boast that "Everyone is for Amendment 2, because Amendment 2 is for everyone".

The delicate dance between party lines and the responsibility to the voters that have elected them will continue through session. The one thing we all must remember is that all politics are local and the voters voice is still important.

With that being said we all enjoy the right to choose and that well informed citizens can make a difference. I encourage everyone to educate yourselves on the issues and the candidates. Choose the candidates that support private property rights and only elects those folks that move our communities forward!

Barry Grooms is the 2018 Vice President of Florida REALTORS, Florida's largest trade organization topping over 167,000 members with an annual budget of 19 millions dollars. His achievements include International Broker/Manager of the year for one of the world's largest real estate franchises. He is a student of public policy, legislative issues, finance and economics related to the real estate industry and frequently is a presenter at industry conferences and international events.



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